That Bruisin' Lad o' Greystone Lodge.

A NOVEL.

BY

THOMAS BRUCE.

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Author of "Cupid and Duty," "Historical Sketches of Roanoke," "Loveless Marriages."

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That Bruisin' Lad o' Greystone Lodge.

SHIRLY—situated in the western portion of North Carolina, is a brand new place. The trees are mere saplings, just beginning to shoot; the narrow streets not even finished in the suburbs, and the people so new that scarcely anyone knows whence another comes. Everything smells of paint, varnish and oil. The inhabitants have a contempt for anything on which time has laid its honored hand, and the gentle voices of culture and refinement are drowned in the hubbub created by a struggle for the almighty dollar and material prosperity.

John Sylvester, a few years ago came to Shirly in a modest way, as a modest contractor, on a modest scale, and by dint of faithful enterprise, as well as successful management, had become comparatively well off. And now Mrs. John was one of the leading social spirits of the day; one of the highest of the high, the most elegant of the elegant, among the mushroom society of Shirly. In the Sylvester household she is Lord Paramount of all—the centre around which everything else revolves, while Mr. John is but an appendage to reflect glory upon her, as her horse and phæton, or any other piece of property which she denominates her own.

But the Sylvesters had a daughter born unto them some seventeen years ago, who stands out in bold relief (not in size) when placed by the side of her mother. A lovely maiden she is, with sweet, quiet, thoughtful ways and a quaint vein of fun and humor running through her. One could not help taking a fancy to her, with her dark, lustrous eyes, beautiful mouth, and pretty, petite, rounded figure. Julia must have inherited her quiet, unassuming ways from

her father's side, because there were none on her mother's to be transmitted. Although attached to the latter, she was free from those jarring, grating ways which detracted ted so much from her parent. Her mother brooked neither rivalry nor opposition; yet it was quite apparent that if the occasion ever rose, Julia's characteristics would as surely overcome her mother's as truth, peace and good sense conquer those qualities of an opposite nature.

Julia was just beginning to have company and beaux. At present her cousin from Etna was staying with her—a Miss Rosa Reynolds. Julia's first beau was named Will Archer, a blue-eyed, light-haired, uncouth youth, who never seemed at his ease, and found it almost impossible to dispose of his hands or feet.

Thus it was Charlie Metcalf found things on his return to Shirly, when he rented a room in the Sylvester mansion, because he knew and liked Mr. Sylvester, whom he had met some years ago.

One Sunday Metcalf came in from his dinner. Passing the parlor door he saw the young ladies in the room with a young gentleman, whom he recognized as Archer. Charlie was about to ascend the stair-way, when arrested by the sound of his name called, he turned and walked towards the door.

"Mr. Metcalf, come in here!" called out Miss Reynolds.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, smiling as he entered.

"We are making up an excursion party and want you to join us," she answered.

"Where to?" he inquired.

"To the White Sulphur Springs, near here," spoke up Archer. "We are going the latter part of this week, and I am going to take Miss Julia."

"I have not said that I would go with you, Mr. Archer," spoke Julia, rather brusquely, turning herself

around on the piano stool, and lightly running the fingers of one hand over the key-board of the instrument.

Metcalf looked up in some surprise. He had always seen girls of her age treat their first beau with some gentleness, even if they were not to the manner born.

"Why, Julia!" exclaimed Miss Reynolds, "you know you are going with him. I thought it was all arranged, that you were to go with Mr. Archer, and I—"

"To go with me, is that it?" interrupted Metcalf, in his usually audacious manner.

"You conceited thing!" she cried, "I never thought about going with you, I—"

"But I did with you," he interrupted again, "and that's why I mentioned it."

"Miss Julia, said that she would go with me, didn't she, Miss Rosa?" asked Archer, appealing to Miss Reynolds.

"Of course," responded she, with a malicious twinkle in her fine eyes.

"Certainly she will go with you," put in Metcalf, looking at Archer. Charlie was now bent on assisting Rosa, who was teasing Julia.

"I never promised to go with you, Mr. Archer," said Julia stoutly, turning around on the stool and facing the whole crowd, with a half defiant air.

"Don't you mind her, Mr. Archer," laughed Metcalf. "She rarely means what she says. She very often says no when she means yes."

"Oh, I understand young ladies," Archer said, smiling in a nervous manner, as he looked towards Julia.

"You don't quite understand me, if you think I'm going to the Springs with you," said Julia, rising and leaving the room in a dignified manner.

An embarrassing pause succeeded her departure. Metcalf felt really sorry for Archer, as he sat first on one hand

and then on the other, pushing first one foot and then the other under his chair.

"Miss Rosa," asked Charlie, desiring to lessen the embarrassment in some way, "won't you go with me to church to-night?"

"Why, certainly—if the rest go," she replied.

"Did you ever see such a young lady, Mr. Archer?" inquired he.

"Why, what do you mean?" she asked, looking quickly at Metcalf.

"Telling me if the rest go!" exclaimed Charlie. "I suppose if I wanted the rest I could ask them."

"Miss Rosa," asked Archer, "won't you please ask Miss Julia to come in here a moment?"

"Certainly, I will," she answered, rising and leaving.

In a moment she returned, followed by the reluctant Julia.

"Miss Julia," said Archer, sitting on both hands and tapping the carpet with his right foot, "I want you to allow me the pleasure of escorting you to church. Miss Rosa and Mr. Metcalf are going. It will be so jolly for us to go along together."

That last sentence was of course, held out as an inducement.

"Mama does not allow me to go to church with young gentlemen," she said, flushing a little as she looked at Metcalf and took her seat again on the piano stool.

Ye gods! what a fib! thought Metcalf, as he remembered having escorted her to church last Sunday evening without any objections on Mrs. Sylvester's part.

"Oh! ah! I did not understand," stammered Archer, crushing his hat in his hand, preparatory to leaving. "Good morning," and he bowed himself out.

"Julia!" exclaimed Rosa, laughing, as soon as she heard the gate shut, "you treat that young man shamefully."

"Oh, but he is such a bore, and so obtuse, and so ignorant," said she, petulantly.

"You are a novel young lady, at all events," laughed Metcalf, taking a cigar from his case.

"How so?" she demanded.

"Because you are the first one I ever knew who did not like beaux, unless they were agreeable to her," he replied, biting off the end of his cigar.

"You'll catch fits if you smoke that cigar in here," laughed Rosa. "Aunt Sylvester thinks lots of her curtains."

"Smoke on, Mr. Metcalf," smiled Julia. "You need not mind mama, and all her *notions*."

Her contemptuous accent upon the last word amused him.

"I expect I had better go on the veranda," he said, rising and suiting his actions to his words.

When Charlie came in that evening after tea to take Rosa to church, to his *chagrin* he found that she was not alone. Both Julia and Mary Kyle, the hired girl of the house, were with her; and all were arrayed in hats and gloves, as if they were ready to start. He was no little annoyed when he saw that the servant girl who cleaned up his room was decked out in colors gay to go to church in the presence of a young lady with whom he especially desired to go alone. His face must have betrayed him, because on glancing toward his eyes Rosa came forward alone, and said in a low tone of voice:

"I could not help it—aunt Sylvester insisted on her going."

"I suppose you are carrying out your word," he said, with a satirical smile, "about not going unless you carried the rest with you. Why didn't you call in the neighbors to go with us?"

"That's downright mean, Mr. Metcalf!" she exclaimed hotly. "Aunt Sylvester said she must go with us; what could I do?"

Charlie liked the ingenuous, sweet, dark-eyed, graceful girl beside him, so he visited a mental blessing upon Mrs. Sylvester's *gaucheries.*

"Well, never mind now," he said smiling, as they moved off, followed by Julia and the maid of all work.

Metcalf said but little going to church, and the ladies were quiet. The servant girl had a most uncomfortable feeling, because she felt that she had thrown a wet blanket over the spirits of the party.

On reaching church, Charlie looked in and saw that the benches were crowded. One of the ushers, however, came forward and conducted them up the aisle. Arriving at the centre of the building, Miss Rosa and Julia were ushered into a seat on the right; whilst the servant girl was placed in one on the left, from which a gentleman rose.

"Take a seat, sir," he said, as he noticed Metcalf moving off.

"I could not think of disturbing you," replied Charlie, not desiring to state that she was a servant.

"But pray do," urged he, in a whisper. "I can procure one anywhere."

"So can I," said Metcalf, trying to withdraw his arm from the clasp of the stranger.

"But," again urged the man, "I hate to separate a fellow from his girl."

Metcalf for an instant felt inclined to knock the fellow down.

"She is no girl of mine—she is Mrs. Sylvester's maid," he uttered in a tone, which caused several of the people sitting around to look askance at him.

Just then he caught Rosa's eyes turned upon him. He felt that she was, in a measure, the cause of his dilemma, and yet she looked as if she enjoyed his discomfiture. At that moment he desired to pummel the chap's head who insisted upon his sitting by Mary Kyle, and pull Rosa's ears for enjoying his misery.

After church he waited at the door until the girls came out. Julia was in front, and as she paused Willie Archer stepped up and said:

"Allow me to see you home."

Metcalf smiled as he caught her glance. Her face fell and she seemed almost ready to cry—all the same Archer hung on, and placed her hand within his arm. For a moment she attempted to hold back, but the cruel crowd, which had no time to inquire into her personal likes or dislikes pressed her onward.

Rosa's face had a roguish smile upon it as she took his arm, which by no means soothed him.

"You treated me shamefully!" exclaimed he, as soon as they were outside.

"You looked so funny and ridiculous standing in the aisle there," she laughed. "I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could help it," he retorted, in an angry tone.

"How could I?" she demanded, opening her eyes wide at him. "You know how angry aunt Sylvester would have been had we refused to take Mary with us."

"You could have gone with me alone—you could have said that you had an engagement," he went on in a complaining tone.

"But I did not like to leave Julia alone—it would have looked so selfish in me. I—"

"Oh, the next time you go," he interrupted, ironically, "take all the neighborhood with you—send around and see who are left behind, and invite them."

"If you don't stop quarreling I will not go with you any more," she said in a mock angry voice, at the same time giving his arm a slight pressure.

"Now, here comes that cub with Miss Julia, right at our heels," he growled in a low tone of voice.

"They are directly behind us—hush-st," she muttered softly.

Charlie and his companion pursued their way in silence, whilst Archer attempted to make Julia enter into conversation with him.

"Been a pleasant evening, Miss Julia."

"Yes."

"A large attendance at church," he went on.

"Yes."

"Mr. Yates preached a good sermon."

"Yes."

"The singing was charming," he ventured.

"No."

Archer began to despair. He scratched his ear with his disengaged hand as if that would enable him to cogitate some subject upon which she might say something more than yes or no. Finding he could not think of any, he determined to question her so that she would be obliged to answer.

"Miss Julia, have you a preference for any kind of flowers?" he asked, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"No."

"Which do you like best?"

"I don't know."

"Do you like geraniums best?"

"No."

"Do you like roses best?"

"No."

"Didn't you tell Miss Laura Bassett that you liked roses the best?" he asked, thinking he had her now.

"Yes."

"Then how can you say you do not like them the best?" he demanded, with a triumphant ring in his voice.

"Can't say."

"Miss Julia, what *can* you say?" he inquired in a plaintive tone, as if in despair.

"Nothing," she said dryly.

Metcalf laughed softly to himself as they entered the front veranda. He felt sorry for Archer, yet half way

vexed at his pursuing a girl who so plainly showed that his presence was obnoxious to her.

"Good evening," said Mr. Archer, as he turned to leave, after seeing Julia vanish through the front door.

"Would you let any girl treat you so?" asked Rosa, looking down upon Metcalf's well-shaped, manly, but not handsome face, as she stood upon the stairway about to ascend to her room.

"Would I?" he asked, looking up at her.

"That you wouldn't?" she exclaimed softly.

"I take a lot from *you*, though," he said, lowering his voice, and emphasizing the you in the manner unmistakable.

"Oh!" she uttered, as the color rushed to her cheeks, and she turned to mount the steps.

CHAPTER II.

"Girls, you are disgracefully late!" exclaimed Mrs. John, as she opened the dining-room door the following morning, while the young ladies were at their ten o'clock breakfast. "Julia, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for allowing that Willie Archer to come home from church with you."

Mrs. Sylvester was in one of her grand moods. She used the adjective "grand," to describe everything from the Niagara Falls, to an ordinary dinner. Being very large, physically, she thought she was equally as large mentally. Standing in the door-way, majestically looking down upon Julia, she meant to be very impressive, and read the girl what she would call a "grand lecture."

"I didn't allow him to come with me," said she, looking up in a surprised manner. "He just came anyhow."

"Tut-tut!" sneered Mrs. Sylvester, advancing nearer to the table. "You need not tell me you could not prevent his coming if you did not want him."

"I could not, though," replied she.

"No, aunt Sylvester, she couldn't," spoke up Rosa.

"And pray, Miss, how do you know?" demanded her aunt.

"Because I was with Julia all day yesterday—when Will Archer was around," said her neice. "In the afternoon she refused to have anything to do with him; refused to go to church with him, and he forced himself on her last night."

"And I wouldn't even talk with him coming back," said Julia.

"Then if you cannot stop him I can," asserted Mrs. John, bringing her foot down upon the floor. "You let me know the next time he comes."

"Mama," said she, looking quietly at her, "I don't like the young man, therefore I shall not receive him. But outside of that, what are your objections to him?"

"He ain't nothing," answered Mrs. John, forgetting her grammar in the midst of her excitement. "He is nothing but a carpenter. Ugh! the idea of my daughter keeping company with him."

"But, mama," she said, "how can you deem that objectionable, since your two brothers are carpenters, and pa used to work at the trade."

Mrs. John was almost stunned for the moment. To be reminded of those things by anyone was bad enough; but to be informed so by her own daughter, whom she was endeavoring to advance in the best society, was unpardonable.

"You ungrateful little thing!" she exclaimed, gesticulating with her right hand, by way of emphasis. "How badly you treat your mother! I have been doing all in my power to raise you properly—to elevate you into the best

society—to place you among the nicest people. And then—for you to throw those disgusting remembrances in my face, is a shame—an awful shame!"

"Mama," asked the girl, looking her full in the face without quailing, "is it a shame—not to be ashamed of your relations who earn their living by honest labor?"

For a moment her mother seemed astonished. She had never been answered back by her daughter before in her life: to be answered now in this kind of unanswerable manner almost took her breath away.

"Mama," went on her daughter before Mrs. John could fully recover herself, "I want to say this too: if I liked Mr. Archer, I should not think less of him because he worked."

"Do you mean to defy me—do you"—

Here she was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who informed her that some one waited in the parlor to see her.

"My patience!" she muttered angrily, "somebody always comes at the wrong time. Do you know whom it is?"

"No ma'am," answered Mary "the man is a stranger."

"Tell him I'll be there in a moment," she said, as she rushed off to arrange her hair and recover her mental equilibrium.

Mrs. John used every means in her power to smooth away all traces of her disturbed state of mind, while she brushed out her hair, and placed here and there such extra touches as she deemed most likely to enhance her personal appearance. After finishing to her satisfaction she walked towards the parlor.

"I am really glad to see you, Mrs. Sylvester," said a young man, rising from his chair with easy, graceful manners.

"Why, Mr. Gordon!" she exclaimed: "where did you come from?"

"I came from Lassiter here, seeking a rest," he replied.

"I came up to see if you could give a way-farer a room for a while."

"That I can," she answered heartily. "I will give you my own front room."

"But I would not have you to incommode yourself," he said.

"Not a bit." she laughed, "I am accustomed to changing around at short notice. When will you wish to come?"

"I would like to come at once," he answered, "I am at the hotel, and you know how uncomfortable that kind of life is."

"Yes, indeed," she said. "Well, you may send your things up this evening, and I will endeavor to put you away to-night. How well you are looking, if I may say so."

"I have no objection," he laughed, rising. "I will return about seven o'clock."

"I will expect you then," she said, watching him as he moved out of the parlor, through the hall into the front piazza.

Curiosity is a trait of character which adorns both sexes alike. As Frank Gordon passed through the hall, three pairs of eyes followed him eagerly—Rosa's and Julia's from behind the curtains at the lower end of the hall, and Metcalf's from a crack in his door. They all saw a man of medium height, with waving brown hair, a massive brow, and eyes so deeply set they appeared almost sunken; well-shaped jaw-bones, coming to a point at the chin like the rounded prow of a cutter; a graceful, well-knit figure, arrayed in dark clothes, which fitted him well. He was scarcely out of ear-shot before he was being discussed by both girls.

"I have seen him somewhere," said Julia.

"I like his face," smiled the other.

"Hasn't he a nice figure?" asked Julia. "And I like the shape of his head."

"Speaking of heads," replied Rosa, laying her cheek

against her hand on the curtain, "Mr. Metcalf's beats them all. He has the finest shaped brow I ever saw, and such lovely chestnut hair."

"But, Rosa," laughed Julia, "he is so dried-up looking. He reminds me of some Egyptian mummy."

"Ain't you ashamed of yourself," said Rosa.

"Why, certainly not; he is not half so good-looking as the last gentleman. I like good-looking men; and that is one reason I dislike Will Archer. He is sinfully ugly."

"Oh, Julia!" exclaimed Rosa, "what strong expressions you use. But speaking of looks: as to gentlemen, I don't think they amount to much. Of course, no one likes to look at an ugly man, but deliver me from one of your wax doll beauties in the shape of a gentleman. I love a manly face—an expressive thoughtful face!—a face that strikes you as the external covering of an internal governing, decided mind."

"I was always a little afraid of those kind of faces," said Julia.

"Why?" asked the other, with a wondering look in her eyes.

"Oh, they always look so ruling and commanding," she answered, raising her *retrousee* little nose a trifle higher.

"Wouldn't you like to be ruled by some strong man?" inquired Rosa, softly.

"Depends upon the man," replied she.

"Well, I would," said Rosa, raising her head and looking dreamily away.

"But you know you always had queer notions," laughed Julia. "And you make them doubly curious by your mode of expression. What girl seventeen years old except yourself would speak of the external and internal parts of a man's head? Now the majority of girls would rather see a head good looking, but that is as far as they generally inquire."

"Then I am sadly in the minority," said Rosa, in a mock, plaintive kind of voice.

"Of course you are, my dear," sagely remarked Julia as she walked into the dining-room.

"Oh, Mr. Metcalf!" exclaimed Rosa, "you almost frightened me," as he thrust his head suddenly behind the curtains.

"I shouldn't think I could frighten such a philosopher," he replied, with a look of decided admiration directed towards her. "I heard you discussing heads just now and I like your ideas."

"You are making fun of me," she said.

"You are making an awfully pretty picture looking through those curtains in that way," he said, as she stood just between them with a hand on each one, holding them at the sides of her exquisitely shaped head.

"Hush up!" she exclaimed, playfully drawing the curtains in front of her face and taking them back as suddenly. "You can't make me believe, Mr. Metcalf, that you think all of those things about me. But here, sir! what do you mean by listening to a conversation which was not intended for you?" and her face assumed a severely reproving look.

"I stand convicted," smiled he. "I cannot plead not guilty, but I am sure that I can file a special plea of justification, which ought at least to mitigate the rigor of your judgment."

"Plead on, and if you give me a good explanation I will lessen the punishment," she said.

"I was looking at the gentleman as he passed out," proceeded he, "and after hearing the sound of his footsteps die away, I heard voices at this end of the hall. Some one mentioned 'Mr. Metcalf's head.' Wasn't it natural I should listen then? The thoughts expressed came from the lips of a maiden of only seventeen years—thoughts which would have reflected credit upon a much older and more experi-

enced head. Wasn't it natural I should listen on? Now can you punish me very severely?"

The earnestness of his tone, the seriousness of his glance, dispelled any idea from her mind that he was flattering her.

"As a matter of justice maybe you ought to be punished just a little," said she, in a gentle voice. "But I feel somehow as if I didn't wish to."

"You know what that feeling is, don't you?" he asked.

"I have an idea," she answered, "but I cannot exactly clothe it in language."

"That is tempering mercy with justice," he remarked.

"Of course it is," she asserted. "But just there lies the difference between small and great minds. Most of us have ideas on subjects which we cannot express. We think them so easily; to give them to others in living thoughts and truths is so different. Some greater mind comes along and instantaneously gives them expression in language, the truth and force of which flashes across our mental world with as vivid a light as if we had uttered them ourselves. Yours is the greater mind, Mr. Metcalf."

"You flatter me," he said, bowing.

"Here comes aunt Sylvester," said she. "I know she will want Julia and I to assist her in fixing a room for that handsome new-comer."

"Who is he?" inquired Metcalf.

"I have no idea," she returned. "Julia said that his face was familiar to her, but she could not recall his name"

"Why, Rosa," said Mrs. John coming up, all traces of her recent ill-humor having disappeared, "I want you and Julia to assist me in arranging a room for the gentleman who was here a moment ago. He wants to come at once."

"Who is the gentleman, mama?" asked Julia, coming from the dining-room.

"You ought to know him; it is Mr. Frank Gordon,"

she answered. "Don't you recollect that he used to visit our house with Johnny Porter?"

"Oh, yes," answered the girl. "I do remember him now. You know, Rosa, I told you I thought I recollected having seen him. He is so jolly and nice! We will have everything ready for him."

"Gordon—Gordon," muttered Charlie, as if soliloquizing to himself, "I know that name. I wonder if he is from Weston county?"

"Yes!" answered Mrs. John.

"Then I know him," said he.

"Does he come from nice people?" asked she, with an important air.

"I should say so!" he replied, in an emphatic manner.

There was a general break-up of the party as Mrs. John and the young ladies went off to attend to their duties and Metcalf to his disciplinary reading, as he usually termed a morning hour given to Gibbon and Macauly.

But for some reason he could not concentrate his attention to the subject in hand. The members of the Prætorian Guard as well as the forms of the Roman Emperors would resolve themselves into various shapes, which he imagined Frank Gordon had taken since he last saw him. Metcalf knew now that he was the same brown-eyed lad who used to visit his brother and himself in Weston. Thinking of the young man conjured up all kinds of childhood and boyhood associations. Finding that he could not devote himself to his mental work he threw aside his book and went for a walk.

Returning after dinner to Mrs. John's, on coming in sight of the house, he saw a gentleman approaching in a leisurely kind of way. His walk appeared familiar, and on nearing the front gate, he looked toward Metcalf. Resting his right hand upon the paling, he waited until Charlie came up.

"Metcalf, what are you doing here?" he asked, extending his hand.

"I have only been here a few weeks," said Charlie, grasping his warmly. "I thought you were the Frank Gordon of old Weston days when I heard your name called this morning."

"Yes," he replied, smiling, "I am the same; do you remember when I used to come to see you and your brother? Don't you recollect the black pony called Monkey, which all three of us rode?"

"I do," answered Charlie, fervently; "I have gone over my whole life since you were here this morning."

"I suppose my coming suggested it," he said in a sympathetic voice. "I am very glad to know that I am domiciled with you; everything will not appear so strange now."

"No," replied Charlie, "there will be much in common between us in this queer place. Come with me now to my quarters and make yourself at home until your room is ready for you."

"Thank you," he smiled, as he followed Charlie into the house.

They went at once to Metcalf's room and were soon comfortably seated, smoking their cigarettes.

"Do you expect to practice your profession here?" asked Charlie.

"No, I think not," he answered, "I am now on a kind of vacation; you see, I have been attorney for a mining district out in the far West and expect to return there. I believe you ply the same craft that I do for your bread and butter."

"Yes, I am a lawyer, too," answered Charlie, thoughtfully; "and, strange to say, I too have charge of a mining district in the state of Ohio, and am having a holiday also."

"Why, isn't that strange?" asked the other, taking

his cigarette from his mouth and looking at Metcalf in a wondering manner.

"It is rather queer, I must confess," returned the other.

"Tell me something about my co-tenants here with me!" demanded Gordon, placing his feet against the window-sill; "you have been installed long enough to find out something about them."

"Well—you know ma Sylvester," said the other.

"Yes I know her," he smiled. "I fancy it doesn't take one long to size her up. Fair, fat, and near forty, as to personal appearances; very aristocratic without possessing a single attribute which makes aristocracy except some money; rather loud and *parvenu*, albeit good hearted and genial; can't converse without drawing the subject of conversation and all present to herself; a person for all the external splendor possible, yet counting the cost accurately."

"I think you have read her well," laughed Charlie, as he threw away his cigarette. "You'll fancy pa Sylvester—not very clever, but with a keen eye to the main chance, not to be despised. He is a plain man, and his ways are correspondingly plain. Nothing stuck up about him! He has a high opinion of ma Sylvester, deferring to her in most things. Devotedly attached to his daughter. For the rest he goes to his work regularly; eats his three meals a day and beyond that his existence and identity are completely swallowed up in ma Sylvester."

"Then I suppose with the exception of reversing matters a little," laughed Gordon, "their life is a true exposition of matrimony as contemplated by law. Pa Sylvester is merged into ma Sylvester and they are truly one."

"That's just about it," laughed Metcalf, softly. "We see this reversed order of things very often in the married state and it seems to work as well as any."

"Well, who else have we?" inquired Frank.

"Ma Sylvester's daughter and ma Sylvester's neice;

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert," went on Charlie. "As to the young ladies, they are nice, sweet and attractive girls; I have nothing at present to say concerning their looks. Beauty is so much a matter of individual expression and taste that I shall leave you to form your own opinion. Of Mr. Herbert and wife, I know very little, but I am sure he is everything a northerner could be who is close. It is said of Mrs. Herbert that she married him to spite a recreant lover. I do not desire to detract from Mrs. H's many attractions, but I am inclined to believe that she got the worst of the bargain in every way.

"So that finishes them up," said Gordon, smiling.

"All except ourselves," returned Charlie, lighting a cigarette.

"Metcalf, where do you take your meals?" inquired the other.

"At the Langdon House," he replied. "If you have not engaged yours elsewhere come with me; you can scarcely do better in this place as to *menu* or associates."

"This is a rather cosmopolitan place anyway—isn't it?" asked Gordon.

"Most decidedly so," returned Charlie. "You meet all classes of people here, from the most respectable swell to the brawny mechanic. Dudes flourish indigenously; society is composed of a gathering of all those people who have money from the heterogeneous mass of inhabitants at large. The people are none the less interesting on account of their variety and present an admirable opportunity for the study of human nature."

"Metcalf, you always had a talent for sawing people up," laughed Gordon as he rose from his seat. "I shall go now and look after my traps."

CHAPTER III.

It was a lovely evening in May, some ten days after Gordon's arrival that ma Sylvester and pa Sylvester were sitting in the front piazza, enjoying the delights of their own vine and fig tree and a matrimonial dialogue.

"Mr. Sylvester," she said, "I think Julia should be sent to school again. I let her stop because she complained of being sick, but I am sure I made a mistake; she was very rude to me the other day and I can do nothing with her; I want you to tell her that she must start again."

"Of course I will," he said. "You are right. I am surprised at her being rude to you: what was it about?"

"I objected to her receiving beaux, and she was very defiant," she said.

"She's certainly too young for that!" he exclaimed. "Her head will be turned."

"That Mr. Gordon has been with her a good deal lately," said she; "I heard that he was very poor. That must be stopped, or she will be entangled in some way with him. Did you ever find out anything about Mr. Metcalf? I like him."

"I tried to," he replied, "but could not. I know of his family and they are nice people, but for some reason which no one can account for he is entirely cut off from them."

"Did you hear the reason?" asked she.

"I have just said that no one seemed to know," he answered.

"I bet you anything he has done something he ought not to," she said, in a very positive way.

"I expect you are right," he assented.

"Of course, if they had money it would be all right," she went on, "but they are evidently poor, and our position in society should make us very careful as to whom we have as associates. Seeing these young men with us, people would naturally suppose they are right in every sense. I

should dislike very much to have either one to turn out otherwise than he ought to. Did you ever notice with what contempt Mr. Gordon speaks of the people around here?"

"Yes, I have," he answered. "But that man is a good judge of character; I have never yet heard him—"

"St—hush," hissed Mrs. Sylvester, "here comes Mr. Metcalf now. I suppose he is going to his tea."

"Won't you have a seat, Mr. Metcalf?" asked ma Sylvester, in her sweetest tone.

"No," he replied, "I am going for my tea. Have you seen Gordon anywhere?"

"He went with Julia to the practicing this evening," she said.

"Oh—he did," muttered Charlie.

"Have you any objection, Mr. Metcalf?" she inquired.

"Who, I?—why do you ask such a thing?"

"Because, your reply sounded that way," she said, in an offended tone.

"I am sure it is your imagination," he laughed. "I am not Mr. Gordon's keeper."

"Does he need one?" she asked.

"Not at present," he answered, significantly, as he moved down the steps.

In the meantime, the subject of this conversation was slowly wending his way with Julia to the hall, known as the opera house. They were chatting very pleasantly as they threaded their way through the thickly-crowded street, oblivious to all around.

"I always hate to walk on this street," said she; "there is always such a crowd."

"They won't hurt you," laughed Gordon; "I will take care of you. What a curious lot of people you have here, anyway."

"Shut up, Mr. Gordon!" she exclaimed, laughing. "You are always abusing our people."

"Oh, no!" he said, "don't call it abuse; call it criticism."

"Well, then, criticising them," she said, mocking him; "at any rate, you are always poking fun at them."

"No—I poke the fun at you."

"About them," she corrected; "you are so precise," she said, petulantly, "I am almost afraid to speak."

"Miss Julia, do you believe your party can get through with Pinafore?" he asked.

"Why not?"

"Because I don't believe you have musical talent enough in this place to sing Pinafore," he replied, smiling. "People must have a certain amount of education in order to act and sing an opera of that sort properly."

"Mr. Gordon, you are shockingly rude!" she exclaimed, almost pausing as they were about to ascend the stair-way of the hall; "do you suppose all the people are ignoramuses in this city? I thank you, I don't consider myself one."

"I wasn't alluding to you, and you know it," spoke Gordon, in a decided tone. "I know you can sing—can act almost anything, but I doubt the success of your opera."

"You would doubt the Lord's Prayer—doubt anything, Mr. Gordon," she said, shrugging her shoulders.

"I can tell you one thing I don't doubt," he almost whispered, as they stood by the door before entering, "that is you."

"Mr. Gordon, how dare you make fun of me?" she uttered, as the color swept over her face.

"There it is again!" he exclaimed, in an irritated tone. "I cannot give an honest expression of an opinion concerning you without your ridiculing it;" and his face wore an angry expression as they entered.

Gordon was becoming interested in this untutored maiden of seventeen; her thoughtful, sweet, winsome little ways interested him no less than her brusque way of pooh-

poohing everything of a personal nature he said to her aggravated him. She laughed at his soft phrases uttered to her, tip-tilted her little nose at his compliments and shrugged her shoulders with contempt when he upbraided her disbelief. Gordon had been accustomed to the fair sex giving him a willing ear when he chose to descant on softer matters, yet this one showed not only impatience but ridicule whenever he directed the conversation in a personal channel.

On taking his seat in front of the stage, he commenced to listen to the leader trying to teach a lot of young men "O'er the Deep Blue Sea," from Pinafore. The professor struggled manfully, as he took each young gentleman seriatim and sang and resang the part with varied waives and flourishes of the hand each time; then he would move off some distance and shout: "now, all together!" The professor's voice would ring out in rich tones while the young men looked on in mute astonishment. Then the leader would wipe the perspiration from his brow in an agonized way, whilst Gordon, though no musician, knew well enough that those young men did not understand a note. How could they when they scarcely took time from their business to eat.

Presently, Gordon heard a titter among the boys around, some of whom had escorted the ladies down; turning his head, he saw one of them slowly walking up the centre of the hall with a placard abstracted from one of the chairs, pinned on his back on which was written the word "taken." When he moved farther off, cheer after cheer went up from the youngsters as the class itself rushed to the front of the stage, whilst a smile played over the professor's features as he exclaimed: "Class dismissed for the evening!" The whole scene was so ridiculous that the feelings of indignation which first rose in Gordon's breast at the ill-bred manners of the young men gave way to unrestrained merriment as he escorted Julia out, while a

number of voices chanted: "Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B."

"Did you ever hear of such conduct?" exclaimed she, as soon as they reached the street. "Why, they broke up the whole night's performance."

"That small boy gave one in its place, though," laughed Gordon.

"He's the worst boy in town," she said. "Mr. Gordon, I don't believe those young men in the class will ever learn Pinafore."

"Just what I thought and predicted," he replied, smiling.

They walked on some moments in silence.

"Mr. Gordon, why don't you say, "I told you so," she uttered, looking around shyly and archly at him.

"You see, I am magnanimous," he smiled.

Just then she moved her hand forward on his arm a little. Gordon looked down upon it. It was beautifully shaped and looked so peaceful and quiet reposing in the silvery light of the moon with its alabaster whiteness.

"What a lovely hand you have!" he exclaimed, in a caressing tone of voice.

"Mr. Gordon—you forget yourself!" she cried out, jerking it from his arm and standing still in the street.

Gordon was completely taken aback.

"Didn't you ever have any one tell you before that your hand was pretty?" he inquired.

"You shan't say those things to me—you don't mean a word of them," she replied in answer to his question.

"I don't mean them!" he exclaimed, looking intently at her. "You choose to assert that," he went on, "but I know better; I mean every word of it. You treat me abominably! I cannot say a word; utter a thought, unless I am roundly informed that I am telling an untruth. I am tired of it! I am downright angry!"

They gazed at each other in absolute silence.

"I don't see any use in staying here any longer," she said, looking at him out of the corners of her eyes.

"Then we will go on," he bowed stiffly, holding out an arm to her through which she meekly put her hand.

Neither uttered a word until they were nearly home.

"Mr. Gordon, are you much mad?" she asked, looking up softly at him.

"Yes, I am," he returned, in a quivering tone of voice.

"Then let's make it up, won't you?" she asked again.

For a moment he made no reply. Then he looked around towards her. Her face was filled with a roguish smile as she glanced up at him.

"Say well, won't you?"

He looked at her again.

"Well," he answered, with a smile, as he held open the gate for her to pass in.

"I wonder if they've retired?" said he, as he noticed the empty chairs in the piazza.

"I hardly expect they have," she returned, "I saw a light in the parlor window; we will go in there."

"So you have returned at last!" exclaimed Mrs. John, who was s sitting upon a sofa, conversing with Rosa and Mr. Metcalf. "What makes you so late?"

"Why, I thought we were early, replied Gordon, "the practicing came to a short end by the enacting of a comedy by one of the small boys," he laughed, as he looked at Julia.

"What did he do?" asked one or two voices at once.

"He overturned Pinafore, for one thing," said Gordon, who then related all that passed, in his usually humorous and sarcastic vein.

"So you do not think they will make a success of Pinafore?" asked Metcalf.

"Not unless they carry the small boy along to divert the audience from the music. I am sure the daily quartette we have here is much superior," said Gordon.

"You mean when we sing, 'I'll be All Smiles To-night, Love,'" laughed Rosa.

"Exactly," he answered.

"Then we'll begin now," said Julia; Mr. Gordon, play the accompaniment."

As Gordon took his seat at the piano and the rest gathered around, they certainly made a handsome quartette; nor were they deficient in singing, either. Even ma Sylvester, lying back on the sofa, was quiet under its influence, and really sorry when the voices died away on the stillness of the air.

"Well, it is time for you to retire, young ladies," she said, rising and bidding the gentlemen good-night.

"Look here, Gordon," said Charlie, as soon as the door was closed, "Ma Sylvester is watching you."

"Hope she will be edified," replied the other coolly, as he lighted a cigarette from the gas. "What causes her to seek me out?"

"Interest in her daughter," said Metcalf.

"How do you know," inquired he, looking up in a surprised manner.

"Because, she as good as told me so," returned Charlie. "What are you up to, Frank, anyway?" asked he.

"I really can't say."

"What are your intentions?"

"I haven't any that I know of."

"What is to become of this—where is it to end?" asked Metcalf, looking thoughtfully at the other.

"I haven't the ghost of an idea; I am simply drifting with the tide," he said.

"Gordon, don't drift on down until you are tired and then leave her alone to stem the torrent into which you have led her," said Metcalf, seriously.

"Metcalf!" he exclaimed, "don't lecture; remember, we are having a holiday now; don't break in on my routine of simple pleasure.

"Gordon, Gordon," said Charlie, rising and pacing the floor; "don't call it a 'simple pleasure' to yourself to raise hopes in a fresh, young heart which will be crushed out, disappointed and withered. That girl is becoming interested in you; you are throwing a charm and light into her existence she never knew before. For God's sake, pause!"

"But, Metcalf," he said, "suppose she interests me; is there anything wrong in seeking her as my wife?"

"You marry Julia Sylvester!" exclaimed Metcalf, almost stammering.

"And why not—pray?" demanded Gordon, coolly.

"Why, what would the proud Gordon's of Weston say to your marrying ma Sylvester's daughter?" inquired Charlie, in reply.

"They would raise shindy," said the other; "my Respected Parent would raise his hands in holy horror when I introduced ma Sylvester, and would doubtless wonder what was the incipient cause of my insanity. I haven't thought of marrying, haven't thought of what will become of the matter, haven't thought of anything but the happy, golden present."

"But please think, Frank," said the other, as they rose to retire.

"Metcalf, you always were a rum kind of chap," laughed Gordon.

CHAPTER IV.

The Langdon House, where Metcalf and Gordon took their daily meals, was first-class in every respect, from the slippered waitresses to the eggs which they served on toast. The house was owned and managed by a

lady named Miss Eliza Langdon—Miss Lize, as her boarders called her for brevity's sake. She was assisted by a most respectable colored woman named Katie Winston, who was of invaluable assistance to her. Miss Lize was known throughout the city as a good financier, and in connection with her mode of management had been characterized as "business all over."

Miss Lize believed in method; she required it from the seating of her guests at the dinner-table, to the feeding of her Skye terrier. Her breakfasts, dinners and suppers were served at regular hours, and each guest was expected to be prompt in attendance.

Miss Lize was honest, too; her *menu* consisted of the best the market could afford, and was always served in the most inviting style; she gave you your money's worth every month, with care and particularity, and at the termination of that period expected you to observe the same rigid punctuality in the settlement of your bill.

She took a motherly interest in every one of her guests, and lived as much for their benefit as her own. The flowers around the house were devoted to their use, and scarcely a Sunday passed during the spring that she did not have a bouquet of roses on each guest's plate, which he was duly expected to use afterward as a button-hole bouquet. She kept thoroughly posted as to each one's habits, mode of life, financial ability and business character, and if she saw anything wrong, would sympathize with or scold the person, as her ideas of right or wrong dictated.

At the present time she was somewhat puzzled about Metcalf; he came to her house a perfect stranger and had been taking his meals there for three weeks. She had tried every way to find out something about him, but failed; no one seemed to know anything about him; so far as she could see or learn, he had no property; he was in no business, nor engaged in any profession, which showed he had visible means of support. She was becoming very much worried

over the matter, had advised with Katie Winston and had lost a good deal of sleep in trying to solve the problem concerning him. To keep any one as a table-boarder without baggage or belongings, knowing nothing about the person, was not to be thought of for a moment.

She determined one morning to go and consult her brother-in-law, Doctor Griswold, who had grown up with the town, and find out if he could give her the desired information.

"John!" she called out to the boy working in the flower beds, "when is your time up for working those beds?"

"Half past nine, Miss Lize," answered the boy respectfully.

"Then John, at fifteen minutes to ten, bring my phaeton out," she said, disappearing.

As she ascended the front steps, Metcalf and Gordon came in to breakfast. Her face was rigidly stolid as she gave them a distant good morning.

"You are late for breakfast, Mr. Metcalf," she spoke freezingly, looking across Gordon at him.

"I am very sorry, Miss Langdon," said he, politely.

"Feeling sorry does not give the servants time to clean off for dinner," she said coldly.

"I shall try and be earlier, next time," he replied, smiling. "But you have never told me yet the exact time of your meals."

"Not my fault," she went on, tartly. "I have the regular hours printed on a card on the wall, hanging next to the dining-room door. Your own negligence is the cause of your not knowing. Mr. Metcalf!—you can go on now."

Gordon was simply astounded at her manner of speaking.

"Judging from her asperity, I suppose she has reached that age in life, which we term old maidism," he remarked hotly, as he hung up his hat.

"She is a very good woman," said Metcalf. "She

carries on her affairs on strictly methodical principles, which is necessary in her business."

"All the same, she has taken my appetite away," he smiled. "I see a fellow over yonder who is just beginning to breakfast—I wonder if he got lectured."

Metcalf turned his eyes towards the other table. He saw a rather tall, spare-made man, with grey hair and side whiskers, and a sharp, vinegarish expression.

"He is a kind of institution here," replied he. "I doubt if Miss Lize called him to account."

"What's his name, and what does he do?" asked Gordon.

"He is a clerk in some department here," answered Charlie. "Alex. Sisson is his name."

"He looks like one of that set," laughed Gordon softly. "He, moreover, has that sharp, hawkisk look, denoting that he loves money."

"He's awfully close, I have heard," said the other. "From a small salary he saved enough to invest in real estate to a certain extent, and has made some money. But what made you think he was stingy?"

"By the general set of his face," said Frank, frowning. "It looks as if he was lean and gaunt to see a dollar."

"Frank," said Charlie, smiling, "you are so hard on people. It seems to me that a man who lays up money and accumulates, must have brain power. At least you respect that."

"No such thing!" exclaimed he. "Brain power is not necessary in order that a man may lay up money. There is no animal so sure to be laden with money as an ass, who rarely knows how to exchange it for anything else. Your concentrated fox is seldom comparable to your concentrated ass in money breeding."

"And pray, why?" asked the other, looking up in a surprised manner.

"Because," replied he, "your concentrated fox thinks

of many things, and turns his attention more than one way. The other talks about money, thinks about money, dreams about money, and acquires no knowledge apart from money, until he becomes a concentrated ass. That is as sure as the fact that a 'dead carrion breeds maggots.'"

"You have been reading something lately on this subject," laughed Charlie. "You argue like a logician."

"Mr. Metcalf!" cried out Miss Lize from her phaeton, as the young men passed through the gate, "we have dinner at one o'clock sharp."

"Yes, miss," replied Gordon, stiffly, as they walked down the street.

The two young men were scarcely out of sight before Miss Langdon ordered John to drive to Doctor James Griswold.

Doctor Griswold married a sister of Miss Eliza Langdon's, and in his own estimation was a person of some importance. His appearance was not prepossessing, with wee bits of grey eyes covered with glasses, common brown hair and beard. He was diminutive in statue, with the exception of large feet. The doctor was an officer in the city, and really believed he had literary talent, which had spent some of its force in writing an article or two for the local papers, on the subjects of "Small-pox," and "The Duties of a Coroner." He was on the point of entering his doctor's vehicle when Miss Eliza drove up.

"Morning, Lize—morning," he said.

"James, I wish to speak with you a moment," she said, as her horse was driven near the curbstone.

"Will you come in the house or remain out here?" he asked.

"Just come up to my phaeton," she replied. "That's it. James, I have a boarder at my house, and I cannot find out anything about him. I thought I would ask you, since you have been here so long."

"What's his name?" inquired the doctor, pursing up his lips, and looking very important.

"Charles Metcalf," she replied, glancing anxiously towards him. "He came about three weeks ago; on yesterday he brought another man with him named Gordon, who wanted table board; I cannot find out anything about either of them. I don't like having young men boarding with me about whom I scarcely know anything."

"Of course, of course," muttered the doctor. "Metcalf—Metcalf; I have heard that name. Oh, yes, I remember now! he was here for a short time and loafed around; Alfred Lorraine knows him. Aha, he is the fellow who left here by moonlight; yes, yes—he is that very rascal who opposed my collecting a coroner's fee. They said he owed money, too; shady character I expect, Lize. I tell you what I will do, I will drive by and see Lorraine; maybe he can give me some information."

"I wish you would, James, and I will take it as a favor. Good-bye James."

"Morning, Lize—morning," he replied, moving towards his gig as she drove off.

The doctor pursued his way down the street, occasionally lashing his horse, which maintained the same dignified dog-trot all the time. He would glance first on one side and then on another, as his thoughts alternated between Metcalf and whether the people he met were thinking of him.

"I will go at once to Lorraine's and find out about that fellow," he muttered, as if to himself.

"What you say, pa?" inquired his thirteen-year-old son, who was driving him.

"Don't ask questions, son," he replied, with a sigh. "Your pa has so much to think about that he cannot contain it all."

"Yes, pa," answered the boy, as they drove on in silence.

Reaching the court-house yard, he went at once to Lorraine's office.

"Mr. Lorraine, can I speak with you a moment," he asked, as he stood within the room.

"Certainly, doctor," answered a tall, square-shouldered gentleman, with gray eyes, gray hair, moustache and goatee.

"I want to find out something about Charles Metcalf—didn't he stay around here at one time?" inquired the doctor.

"Yes, he did; what do you wish to find out? I saw him here the other day," said Lorraine.

"What kind of a man is he?" asked he.

"How do you mean?" inquired Lorraine, in his turn; "as a lawyer, he is a master of his profession; he is very smart I can tell you, and extremely agreeable."

"Didn't he leave here owing some money?" inquired the doctor.

"I know very little of Metcalf's personal affairs," he answered. "He was a very reticent man about his matters, but I understood at the time that he did owe some; if he has not paid it, I am sure he will when he gets it."

Wasn't there some talk about his being wrong in some way?"

"I have heard that he was very reckless and extravagant at one time. I further understand," went on the lawyer, "that he had some family trouble, the nature of which I never understood, nor did I ever seek to inquire."

"So, ho!" exclaimed Dr. Griswold, brightening perceptibly, "he has a shady character I expect."

"I would advise you not to say anything of that kind to him, doctor," said Lorraine quietly.

"Why, is he dangerous?" asked the other.

"Extremely so," answered Lorraine, in a positive manner. "He would be disagreeably so if you were to intimate such a thing to him."

"Oh, I don't propose having anything to do with him,"

said the doctor, in a supercilious manner; "I simply wanted to find out if he didn't leave here owing money."

"I can give you no positive information on that score," he smiled, turning to his papers as the doctor rose to leave.

The information received from Lorraine was by no means damning enough in Dr. Griswold's estimation.

He then determined to see Mr. Hill, the city sergeant, and find out if he could throw any light upon Metcalf's character. He knew that the sergeant was well-informed on all matters concerning the pecuniary transactions, liabilities and movements of the people who had lived here. Going at once to the court-house building, he found him in his office.

The sergeant rose as he entered.

"What can I do for you, doctor?" inquired he.

"I want some information about a certain party who lived here," he replied.

"Who was it, doctor?" he asked.

"A Mr. Charles Metcalf; Lorraine knows him—he used to stay around here," answered he.

"I knew him in my official capacity, only," said Mr. Hill. "I can tell you one thing, he is a brilliant man."

"What was his reputation concerning money?" asked the doctor.

"Well, now doctor, I doubt if I can give you any information on that score," replied Hill, his countenance falling. The sergeant disliked to repeat hearsay derogatory remarks made about anyone, and he knew many had been spoken about Metcalf. "I did hear that he failed to pay some money that he owed."

"Is that so?" exclaimed the doctor, feigning surprise. "Did you ever hear any one say anything else about him?"

"I don't remember just now—let me see. Doctor, I can inform you who is most likely to tell you all about him—"

"Who?" asked the doctor, interrupting him eagerly.

"Treherne, my deputy," answered Hill. "I remember now that he was born and bred in the same county in which Metcalf lived—wait a moment, I'll 'phone for him.

In about five minutes Treherne came in, a genial, kind-looking man.

"Treherne," inquired Hill, "do you know anything about Charles Metcalf, who staid here once?"

"Yes, I was bred in the same county—I know all his people well," replied Treherne.

"What kind of people are they?" asked Doctor Griswold.

"The best in the state," answered the other.

"What about him; wasn't there something wrong with him?" queried the doctor eagerly, with that deeply interested expression upon his face betrayed by a terrier watching expectantly at a rat-hole, knowing that the little animal may come out any moment.

"In what way do you mean?" inquired Treherne, really amused at the look upon his face.

"About his pecuniary matters, and such like," replied he.

"His money matters have always been wrong," laughed Treherne. "He spent an estate of some fifty thousand dollars, and got head over heels in debt—"

"Good gracious!" cried Doctor Griswold, "what a scamp!"

In his estimation, a man was a rascal who threw his money away, unless in his direction.

"I heard also," went on the deputy, "that he had some kind of trouble at college. I could never learn the particulars of that. I—"

"What was it?" he interrupted again, with almost breathless anxiety.

"Something about a lady," said the deputy. "I never found out what the mystery was, but I know it caused him some trouble. He was never the same man afterwards.

But, doctor, he is a gentleman, and one of the most generous men I ever saw."

"Sir!" exclaimed the other, swelling with righteous indignation, "he is a rascal!" And the doctor brought his hand down upon the table with a slap, which caused the pens and ink to rattle.

"Doctor," said Treherne, his face assuming a serious expression. "I do not mean to interfere in your private matters, but you had better not speak about Metcalf in that way, because if it came to his ears I would not like very much to be in your place. He is the worse person aroused I ever knew. I just offer this as a suggestion for your own benefit."

"I suppose I could defend myself," said he, paling at the very idea of such a suggestion.

"Better men than you, doctor, have tried and failed, when he was interfered with," said Treherne quietly.

Doctor Griswold paused a moment and looked at Treherne from out of his wee bits of eyes. He felt sure that Treherne was friendly towards Metcalf, and would not tell all he knew.

"And that's all you know?" he asked, with a certain tone of doubt in his voice as he put the question.

"Oh, I suppose there is much more that could be told about the man," replied the deputy, "but I have never heard anything else derogatory to his reputation. He was exceedingly fond of fine horses, and rode a great deal; in fact, spent much money in that way. It was also said that he had a genius for managing ladies as well. He had a nick name given him by the fellows in the county."

"What was that?" he inquired.

"I was just trying to think—oh yes! It was 'That Bruisin' Lad O' Greystone Lodge.'"

"Well, tell me something about that college scrape he got into?" he asked impatiently.

"I told you I could never find out anything about it,"

he returned. "No one seemed to know a thing about the circumstances connected with it."

"Was he ever married?" asked Doctor Griswold.

"He is said to have been married," replied Treherne.

"Where is his wife?"

"I can't tell you who she is nor where she is," continued the deputy. I do not positively know that he was ever married. Some suppose that the lady with whom he had the affair while he was at college and his wife was one and the same person."

"Ah-ha!" the doctor exclaimed softly. "I begin to find out something. I—"

"Don't lay any stress on what I tell you, doctor," interrupted Treherne, "because I know nothing positively."

"Oh, I understand!" cried the doctor, with a peculiar ring in his voice, as he drew on his gloves and left.

The doctor was a little worried and puzzled as he walked back to his gig. He had mentally determined when he started out that morning, that after gaining his information he would seek Metcalf out, upbraid him properly, and then inquire how such a person as he dared to obtain quarters at his respectable sister-in-law's. But since he learned of Metcalf's being a dangerous man his love of self overcame his idea of duty, and he determined to say nothing to Metcalf at present. He was puzzled, because he felt certain there was something about the man which he could not get at; nevertheless he was satisfied that there were some awful things about him, and made up his mind to so report the matter to his sister-in-law.

"Strange!" he muttered, as he reached his gig. "It seems impossible to get at any tangible fact concerning him"

"Where to, pa?" asked his son as he stepped into his vehicle.

"Drive to the Langdon House," he replied, absently.

On reaching there, and walking into the inclosure, he

found Miss Eliza and Mr. Sisson sitting in the vine-covered piazza.

"Evening, Lize—evening, Sisson," he said, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow. "Shall I tell you here the result of my investigation?" He looked towards Mr. Sisson, who glanced across the street in a mock-disinterested kind of manner.

"Of course," she answered. "Mr. Sisson is like a member of the family."

"Lize," he proceeded solemnly: "that man Metcal cannot be trusted. He spent a large estate and ran in debt. He also married and deserted an estimable young lady. He is a 'shady lot.'"

"I told you he wouldn't do," chimed in Sisson. "I know a man when I see him. He is stuck up, too. He treats us office boys as if he didn't care a rush for us."

"I was afraid something was the matter," she said solemnly, as she rose and walked towards the door.

"You'll make him leave, won't you Lize?" asked her brother-in-law.

"At the end of the month," she answered, flatly, leaving the gentlemen to their own ruminations, as she went to prepare for dinner.

CHAPTER V.

A few days after the foregoing events, an evening sun was pouring its slanting rays o'er the trees and green grass in pa Sylvester's yard.

Rosa Reynolds was sitting upon the rustic seat around the apple-tree, looking down upon her feet as she moved them backwards and forwards in the thick, cool-looking grass. Her countenance was obscured from view by a large,

bewitching-loooking straw hat, so that Metcalf, who had come upon the piazza a moment ago, could not see her face.

Watching her as she sat bending over, with her dark tresses waiving here and there, her lythe, rounded figure stooping over, her easy, graceful movements with her feet, The Bruisin' Lad, who had rarely glanced at a woman before, felt his pulse quicken and his heart beat faster than its usual wont.

She heard a movement on the porch; she glanced up quickly and then smiled.

"Oh! it's you!" she exclaimed, "I thought it was somebody."

"I count myself somebody, although I have some doubt about my being more than an actual existing somebody," he replied, walking across and taking a seat by her.

"I didn't mean that you were nobody," she laughed, flushing slightly, "I meant to say that I thought you were somebody else. You know that I think you are quite a somebody—you know you are awfully clever."

"I know—I—am—clever!" he exclaimed, pausing between each word. "I don't know any such thing."

"The article you wrote was clever, at any rate," she said, looking in a teasing manner at him.

"My article!" he uttered slowly, with surprise. "What do you know about it?"

"Then you did write it—so my little birdie was not wrong," she laughed softly, as he looked at her in mute astonishment.

"To which article do you refer?" he asked.

"So you have written more than one, have you?" she inquired. "You have been very mouse-like and quiet about your pursuits, and people have been wondering what you are doing, but I heard some one speak of an article in the *Eclectic* which you wrote, and when I tax you with it, in your eager curiosity to find out something, you give me an insight into your craft. Allow me to congratulate you,

Mr. Metcalf, upon being a member of that favored class known as—authors. I have your secrets now, and my price of secrecy is all sorts of nice behavior on your part."

"You astound me—please tell me how you found out, won't you?"

"Mr. Metcalf," she said, smiling roguishly at him, "you are better known than you thought or had an idea of. I am not going to tell you who told me."

"Do tell me," he urged.

"No—I promised I would not."

"The person won't mind," he begged in a pleading tone.

"Oh—oh! yes the person would. I never betray confidence."

"I am simply astonished," he said, looking in a puzzled manner towards her, "at such a thing leaking out. You are a kind of uncanny spiritual being, I believe."

"I know something about Mr. Gordon, too!" she cried.

"Why, what do you know about Gordon?"

"He is writing too."

"Gordon writing!" he exclaimed. "I don't believe it. What is he scribbling upon?"

"A Sketch of Shirly," she answered.

"Who told you that?" he asked, full of astonishment. "Look here! If you don't tell me who informed you about these things, I shall really believe you are a supernatural, spiritual being."

"I am flesh and blood," she said. "St. Paul informs us that flesh and blood is not spiritual but earthly—earthy, of the earth. How can I be a spiritual person?"

"Then you are a spirit—spiritual—"

"Contraption!" she interrupted.

Metcalf laughed heartily at this word.

"When did you coin that part of speech?" he asked, as soon as his laugh subsided.

"Why that's a good old English word," she replied, drawing herself up with dignity.

"You can't find it in the dictionary, anyhow," he said.

"Have you looked for it," she asked.

"No."

"Then you don't mean to say that you know every word in the dictionary?"

"No."

"Then you don't know whether contraption is there or not," she said, bringing her right foot down upon the grass with an emphatic stamp.

"I acknowledge I am vanquished," he cried, looking with undisguised admiration at the young girl who turned him down so easily.

"Mr. Metcalf, why do you look at me with such a curious, earnest gaze," she asked. "I have noticed you do it several times."

For a moment there was a pause, as each glanced at the other; only for a moment, though, because after that her eyes sank beneath his gaze in spite of her efforts to keep them steadily fixed on his, whilst a faint blush gradually stole over her cheeks, until at last her whole face was suffused with color. The natural sequence to such a question never once occurred to her until after she had asked it, and she felt as if she would like to sink into the earth at her feet. Her eyes were raised but once more—only to meet his same steady gaze, beneath which they fell as quickly again.

"I look at you," he said, his voice quivering at first, "because you are the most natural, unaffected, ingenuous human being I ever saw. Moreover, I cannot help feeling that you could be trusted just as implicitly as we believe in the gospel of St. Matthew."

"Oh, Mr. Metcalf!" she exclaimed, almost humbly, "isn't that sacriligeous?"

"Are you sacriligeous?" he asked.

"I hope not," she replied, earnestly.

"Then nothing I could say about you would be."

"Mr. Metcalf, I—I didn't—"

"Mean to ask that question," he interrupted. "I know you spoke without thinking and would have recalled the question ere it was asked, but that, like everything else you do, is in perfect keeping with your ingenuous *naivete*. Miss Rosa, as the God of nature created you, so you are now; strive hard to hold fast to so invaluable an acquisition."

"I never thought being natural was so wonderful," she said, simply.

"Isn't it something to be like the Creator who made you—reflecting his image in every act and thought?" he asked.

"How does being unaffected and ingenuous make any one more like the image of God?" she asked, in reply.

"Because every creation of God is perfect," he returned. "The natural, simple, unaffected ways of which we are speaking is but a perfect resemblance of Him in manner. It is this likeness to perfection in what is natural, which appeals so strongly to all of us who are rowing more or less in the craft of hypocrisy."

"I never thought of that before," she said, looking thoughtfully towards the western horizon.

Just then Julia came out.

"Where are you going?" he inquired, as Rosa rose.

"Over to Edie's," she said.

"Edie's!" he exclaimed, "who is she?"

"She is my ma's sister," spoke up Julia, as she joined them.

"Can I go?" he asked, plaintively.

"Depends," said Julia.

"On what?"

"Our sovereign wills," cried Rosa, dropping into her usually teasing vein.

"But I reckon I can go," he smiled.

"I spec'," said Julia, making a little moue at him, as they moved off.

The trio proceeded down the street, Julia on the inside, Rosa next to her and Metcalf on the outside. Whenever any of the household went walking, it mattered not how they manœuvered, Metcalf would invariably find himself by Rosa's side.

"I wonder what has become of Mr. Gordon?" asked Julia.

"He's ruminating," laughed Rosa.

"On what?" asked she.

"On statistics. Mr. Metcalf, you are not fair!" exclaimed Rosa.

"How so?" he inquired, moving a little closer and bending his head nearer as if to catch her reply.

"You are not keeping your place on the side-walk—you are pushing me against Julia."

Rosa had a habit when walking on the street of gracefully half turning when she spoke. Metcalf's heart gave a bound as she did this, and her lovely brown eyes sparkled near his.

"You are so mean!" she went on, in a half petulant manner.

"I am not half so mean as you are, to quarrel over such a little thing," he growled, with contempt.

"I am not bad—I am just as good and sweet as I can be," she said, pouting, then giving him a roguish smile with the same lips.

"Rosa, how conceited you are!" exclaimed Julia. "You two are forever quarreling."

Julia was not far from wrong in a certain sense; whenever Metcalf and Rosa were together with any one they invariably began a mock battle, in which the most unheard of accusations were hurled by each one at the other.

When they reached Miss Edie Farmer's house, Rosa stopped on the sidewalk.

"Julia, I believe I will go and see Miss Lettie."

"I'll take you," said Metcalf, as he held the gate open for Julia to pass through.

"Who is Miss Lettie?" he asked, as they proceeded onwards.

"Miss Lettie—don't you know the young lady who came up with me and married Mr. Fitzgiblet?"

"You mean the one who married the old gentleman over here for his money?"

"Yes," she answered, "wasn't it funny? he is eighty and she is some fifty years old. They never saw each other until she came to marry him; he was angry with his children by his first wife, and concluded to disinherit them. He commenced talking soft to Edie, but she would not listen to him; then he gets Miss Edie to write to Miss Lettie Wiseman, who responded most favorably and so they were married."

"What a pair of idiots!" exclaimed he, contemptuously.

"They seem very happy, all the same," she said, as they paused before a gate, which Metcalf proceeded to unlatch.

An old gentleman, stooping with age, one foot tottering on the brink of the grave, met them at the door. By his pronunciation Metcalf knew he was of German descent.

"How vis ye, me tear?" he asked. "Coom in; bring ye frien' vid ye."

"Is Miss Lettie in," asked she.

"Yes, here I am," said a cheery voice from the hall. "Come on in, Rosa."

Metcalf saw a gray-headed lady, with a partially wrinkled face, who still possessed some traces of having been handsome, long and merry ago.

When they were all seated in the cozy sitting-room,

Metcalf looked at the old couple in sheer astonishment. There was a self-satisfied, placid look on the old gentleman's face, whilst Fitzgiblet's wore a kind of half-apologetic expression of countenance, which produced the impression that she forever begged pardon for having married the old man. Her face, too, was familiar to Metcalf; he felt a desire to find out where he had seen her before, but experienced a hesitancy in breaking in on the conversation between the ladies. Presently there was a pause.

"Mr. Metcalf," she said, "I used to know some of your people, I think."

"Where, Mrs. Fitzgiblet?" he asked.

"At Lancing Court House; I lived there once and have seen them frequently, going to and returning from Etna."

"I remember now that I saw you there," he said. "Where did you move to from there?"

"I went to Etna," she returned. "I am well known in Etna; here is a letter I received from one of the first ladies in that place. This shows that I was well thought of there, and was *not obliged* to make a change of life."

Here she took a letter from the table and showed it to Metcalf, who glanced at the signature, as he thought how each apology demonstrated the fact that she was not only conscious of having bartered her self-respect, but that it needed some auxiliary aid for support.

"Oh, yes—I know Mrs. Otway," he said smiling. "You are indeed fortunate in having such a friend; I know that she is an elegant and refined lady, who has won an enviable reputation through her charitable works."

In a moment Rosa proposed to leave.

Passing Edie's house, they found that Julia had gone to call upon a neighbor.

"And you call that a happy pair!" cried Metcalf, with a slight fling of contempt in his voice.

"Why, certainly," she answered. "He never wants her out of his sight, and they appear happy."

"Miss Rosa!" exclaimed he, almost pausing in his walk, "that is an unhappy, conscience-struck woman, as sure as you are living."

"The idea!" she ejaculated; "Miss Lettie never did anything in her life to cause her remorse."

"I am sorry to hear *you* say that," he proceeded, as they walked on slowly. "Has a woman done nothing who barters herself for the extrinsic trappings of matrimony? Has she done nothing in crushing out those more delicate, gentle sentiments, filled with little passions sweet, which ought to be cherished faithfully to render her more womanly and refined? Has she done nothing who sacrifices her true womanhood, belonging really to the man of her heart, for victuals and clothes, or luxuries? If nothing else, she has merely committed degredation, and just think what a quagmire that is for a lady to sink into."

"Mr. Metcalf, you always give me something to think about," she said. "I am sure you are right because I know I cannot bear anyone whom I do not like to come near me."

They walked on in silence until the Sylvester mansion was reached. When near the piazza, Gordon hailed Metcalf from the window.

"Go and see what he wants," smiled Rosa, relieving him of her flowers and parasol which he was carrying.

CHAPTER VI.

Although physically small, Doctor Griswold was neither lacking in natural sense nor in a kind of dogged determination we often see in characters like his. He never

for one moment thought of giving up the investigation concerning Metcalf until he had exhausted what he considered the entire field of inquiry. He dwelt so much upon the derogatory side of this man's hearsay character without knowing anything of his good traits, that he really believed him to be a villian in disguise.

While Metcalf was basking in the sunlight of Rosa's smiles, Doctor Griswold was diligently attempting to find out something about him. He determined to see some of his medical friends who had been here longer than himself; then he suddenly thought of Doctor Harry Campbell, who had recently settled here, and recollected that he was from the same county as Metcalf. Calling for his gig and donning his hat, he carried out the purpose formed in his mind of going to see Campbell, and in some thirty minutes was in his office.

Campbell was very polite to Doctor Griswold, feeling sure that the latter had heard something of his wonderful knowledge in midwifery and came to call him in for consultation. He looked very important as he took his seat, and pulled at his thin, light moustache.

"Doctor Campbell, I want some information about a gentleman from your county," said Griswold.

Campbell's face fell as he endeavored to smooth away the disappointed look which he could feel overspreading it.

"What is his name?" he asked.

"Charles Metcalf."

"By Jove—he comes from big people."

"What about him?" asked Griswold.

"In what way?"

"Concerning his pecuniary transactions."

"I have heard much of his reckless expenditure of money, but—"

Here he was interrupted by the entrance of a gentleman no less than Frank Gordon.

"Take a seat," motioned the doctor with his hand. "I will be through in a moment."

He then turned again to Doctor Griswold.

"As I was proceeding to say, I never heard anything else very wrong about Charlie Metcalf."

"Didn't he have some woman trouble?" asked Griswold.

"Don't exactly catch your meaning."

"Didn't he get in a scrape about some lady?" inquired he, again.

"Well, I heard some floating rumor of that kind," responded Campbell, "but never learned the particulars."

Gordon almost started from his chair, but restrained himself and looked unconcernedly out of the window.

"Didn't he fail to pay his debts?" asked Doctor Griswold.

"Why, some years ago I understood that he lived beyond his means and created liabilities."

"Wasn't he considered a rascal?" asked the doctor viciously.

"By no means," responded the other. "His reputation, so far as I know, was that of a reckless, helter-skelter young man, as generous with his money as he was negligent in transactions concerning it."

"But he is a rascal, sir!" cried the doctor, with an indignant look.

Gordon almost started from his seat and he flashed a look towards Doctor Griswold as dark as a thunder-cloud.

"Doctor, you had better be careful as to the language you use about Charlie Metcalf," said Campbell. "The soil of North Carolina never nurtured a more reckless, desperate character when aroused, than 'That Bruisin' Lad o' Greystone Lodge,' and I would dislike to see you incur his displeasure."

"Doctor Campbell," said Gordon, rising, "I have to leave now, but I will see you again."

"What is your name," asked he.

"Never mind about that, doctor," and touching his hat he was off.

Descending the stairway, he scarcely knew what to think, but he was judge enough of human nature to recognize intuitively that the man whom Campbell addressed was inimical to Metcalf. He would acquaint Charlie with it at once. Then he recollected he had not heard the man's name He paused middle-way upon the stairs, and turning retraced his steps.

"Doctor Campbell, who is that man sitting near you?" he asked.

Both medical gentlemen looked up in surprise.

"Griswold is my name," said he, as soon as he recovered self-possession. "What do you want with me?"

"Nothing but your name, Doctor Griswold," he responded, as he turned upon his heel and left the room.

He went at once to the Sylvester's to find Metcalf. His first impulse was to see Charlie and tell him all, but as he became cooler he saw that would never do. As much as he liked his friend and disliked the doctor, he took enough interest in humanity not to desire the latter to have his head punched, which he saw would be the inevitable result if he told Charlie all. Gordon knew something of the Bruisin' Lad's temper, for he remembered having seen him aroused once at a tournament, when he committed fearful destruction on all sides with a lance.

Arriving at the house, he looked for him but found he was out. Going to his room, he waited as patiently as he could until he saw him enter the gate with Rosa.

"I do believe he is getting interested in that girl," soliloquized Frank, as he watched them approach. When they neared the porch he called Metcalf.

Gordon pitched into the subject as soon as Charlie was in the room.

"Somebody here is trying to find out something about you!" he exclaimed.

"Who?" he inquired, in a surprised manner.

"A Doctor Griswold."

"What did he desire to learn?"

"Something about your private character," replied Gordon.

He then informed Metcalf all he had heard in Campbell's office, withholding the epithets of abuse which Doctor Griswold used. When Frank came to the part relating to the lady, he noticed Metcalf's face pale perceptibly, as it assumed a hard, set expression.

"I say, old chap!" cried Gordon, "we all knew about your extravagance, and how you injured yourself by it, but you never had any discreditable affair with any lady, did you?"

Gordon looked so frankly and affectionately at Metcalf that the latter was completely disarmed.

"Gordon," he said, "I appreciate the nature and delicacy of your inquiry enough to remove any false opinions which you may entertain on that score. I did have an affair with a lady, but it was nothing to my discredit, and if the truth was known, you would see that I was grossly sinned against. At present the interests of others prevent my speaking as frankly as I otherwise would about the matter. My simple declaration will have to suffice you now."

"Your word is sufficient," said Gordon warmly, "and you have my sympathy. I did not mean to pry into your affairs."

"Gordon, did you say that Griswold was going to try and find out something from Ruskin?" asked Metcalf.

"He said he would write to Ruskin this evening."

"What do you suppose is his object?" asked he.

"To find out something about that lady, if he can."

"I must see Ruskin at once," went on Charlie. "He always blamed me for keeping silent, and he might blurt

out something in reply to Griswold's letter which I do not wish known."

"Can't you write?"

"Griswold's letter might have gone by now, and might reach there earlier than mine."

"Wire then," suggested Frank.

"Not on a matter of this kind," he answered gravely. "I will have to go."

"How about your engagement to go to church with Miss Reynolds to-morrow?" he asked.

"I will return by ten-thirty to-morrow morning."

"Let's see," said Frank. "You will be in a rush all the time. You leave here at 6:55, reaching Etna at 9:00 P. M., and catch the Netherville connection at 12:00. Roland, your nearest station to Greystone Lodge, can be made by one o'clock. The return train leaves there at half past two. You will have only one hour and thirty minutes, provided Ruskin is on hand—and eight miles to go."

"I can do it," said Charlie. "Spotty Dimple can bring me from Greystone Lodge to Roland in ten minutes."

"You'll kill him, too!" exclaimed Frank. "You go and get your traps ready and I will forward a telegram to Ruskin."

Metcalf proceeded to write the dispatch.

As Frank rushed off, he said:

"Wire James Metcalf, at Greystone Lodge, to have a trap at Roland to meet me."

"All right," cried Frank, as he went down stairs.

Metcalf pursued his way leisurely down to arrange what was necessary in the way of linen to be taken on his trip. Passing the parlor door he paused a moment to look in; the girls were at the piano looking over some music.

"Where did you come from?" asked Julia, turning upon the stool and facing him.

"From Gordon's room," he answered.

"Where is Mr. Gordon? we want him to play an accompaniment for us," said she.

"I sent him off."

"Then come in and take his place," spoke she in a commanding tone.

Metcalf came forward.

"Mr. Metcalf, watch those girls!" exclaimed ma Sylvester. "Whenever Mr. Gordon plays or sings for them, they invariably make faces at him behind his back. You are too dignified for that sort of amusement, so I warn you."

"Girls," he said, turning upon the stool, "you are at liberty to make just as many faces as you choose, but if I catch either of you in the act, I will kiss you sure. So like the Spartans, be wary.

"The idea!" exclaimed both girls, simultaneously, "You have lost your mind!"

He turned toward the key-board whilst a suppressed giggle might have been heard from the two girls behind.

The temptation to do what they were forbidden was more than the feminine nature of the young ladies could bear. Moreover, they felt sure he could not see. He had scarcely began his music, when looking in the bright ebony front of the piano he saw the two girls in their reflected likenesses, not only making all kinds of faces, but even clawing at him in an imaginary way with their fingers.

Suddenly he arose from the piano and there was a scream and then a rush. He caught Julia, who was behind, and kissing her as quickly as he could, left her all in a heap on the parlor floor. He rushed for the stairway up which he bounded two steps at a time endeavoring to overtake Rosa. She ran towards her room, but finding the catch on her door fastened, turned upon him like some beautiful, wild animal at bay.

"Don't—don't kiss me!" she exclaimed, as both of them paused for breath.

"Then why did you make a face at me?" he asked, his breast heaving.

"I didn't—"

"Yes you did," he interrupted. "I saw you; I am going to kiss you." He moved nearer.

"Go back, Mr. Metcalf!" she almost shouted, with an indignant ring in her voice. "You shall not; I will call for uncle Sylvester."

"I am going to do it," he said grimly, moving a trifle nearer. "I kissed Julia and I am not going to let you off."

"But Julia is not so old as I," she said, the color surging into her cheeks. "I am a woman—"

"And as lovely and sweet a one as ever was created," he interrupted, drawing nearer still, whilst his hot breath fanned her cheek, as she shrank against the wall.

They looked at each other for one moment.

"Oh, Mr. Metcalf!" she exclaimed, shivering all over, "what a curious, determined look you have! You frighten me!"

It was the expression of the hitherto pleasant, kind Metcalf—changed to the set, determined look of "That Bruisin' Lad O' Greystone Lodge." Metcalf would have kissed her then if the act had killed them both. He raised his right hand.

"Mr. Metcalf, please don't!" she cried.

Her voice changed from the defiant to the pleading, as his face almost overshadowed hers.

"You had as well submit!" he exclaimed hoarsely, raising his other hand.

She knew the time had come, and instinctively placed both hands over her face. She made a gallant resistance, but all to no effect. He caught her hands and took them from her face. Throwing his right arm around her shoulder he took possession of her chin, and holding her face back, kissed her soft, yielding, mobile lips—not with the view of

paying any penalty, but with all the wealth and strength of a love which he had never given to any woman before.

Standing there after she was released, not a word passed between them for a moment.

"Mr. Metcalf!" she exclaimed, between her gasps for breath, "you are downright mean!"

"Am I?" he asked, softly.

"Ugh—isn't it awful!" she cried, pulling at her handkerchief. "Just think, to be kissed by a real man!"

"Were you ever kissed by an imaginary one before?" he asked.

"No one ever dared to try it!" she exclaimed, her eyes flashing,

A thrill shot over him as she said that.

Metcalf and Rosa were standing near the landing of the stairway. Presently they heard a door open at the upper end of the hall. A head all tousled up, a neck without collar or cravat, was poked out of the door, as a voice exclaimed: "Marie!"

"Well Johnnie—coming," answered Mrs. Herbert's sweet tones from the opposite room.

"Come—come on now," he half stammered petulantly.

"Can't you wait until I get through?" she asked.

"Oh—ah—do come on now, the baby is all alone."

"But you are there with her," said Mrs. Herbert.

"Oh, but it is the woman's business to do these things," he said. "I never saw such ladies as they have in this place. They certainly have a soft snap. Why, my aunt keeps house, cooks for eight people, cleans up four rooms, does all the washing and ironing, goes to market and has four or five hours every day to herself."

"I know aunt Lucy is a paragon," said she, as she entered their room. He banged the door behind them.

"Why can't the cub give his wife a moment's peace!" cried Charlie. "Would you stand such treatment?"

"Not from him," said Rosa flatly.

"My goodness, it is six-fifteen, I will be late," said Charlie, looking at his watch.

"Where are you going," she asked.

"I am going to run over to my brother's, but will return to-morrow. Good bye."

"Good night," she returned softly, as he started down.

Leaning over the balustrade, she watched him in the act of descending. His dark, curling, chestnut hair looked very pretty. She opened her hand and moved it up and down as if carressing something; at the same time thinking how nice it would be just to pat his head softly.

On reaching the hall below he met Gordon.

"Got your things ready," asked Gordon.

"Have them so in a moment," he replied.

Some fifteen or twenty minutes afterwards Metcalf and Gordon started for the station. Slowly pursuing their way down the street, neither one knew that Rosa's lustrous dark eyes were watching Charlie; whilst her heart wished him God-speed and a quick return.

CHAPTER VII.

The modest John Sylvester, the modest contractor, sat in a modest way on his fine piazza after tea during the same evening on which Metcalf went to Greystone Lodge. He was enjoying the balmy weather, his cool front yard, and wondering to himself why he should have been so fortunate. John was as happy as a man ever becomes in this world—chewing his tobacco and waiting for ma Sylvester to come and tell him the news of the day.

The rustle of many clean, stiff skirts soon heralded her approach.

"Mr. Sylvester," she said, pausing in the doorway, "Julia has gone out again with that Mr. Gordon."

"Can't you hold her in check?" he asked.

When he thought of how she held him down he was convinced that her powers in that direction were unlimited.

"I can do nothing with her," she replied. "I never saw anyone so thoroughly self-willed in all my life. I expressly warned her about this Gordon, but she will not pay any attention to me."

"I will see what I can do with her," he said, as he rose from his chair to offer Mrs. Herbert a seat, who came out then.

"Marie—we were just speaking of Julia's going with that Gordon so much," remarked ma Sylvester.

"He seems to be a very nice gentleman, at all events," Marie said.

"But who is he—what money is he got?" asked ma Sylvester, who was rather careless about grammar when she became excited.

"I am sure I know nothing about him," she replied, "but he certainly is clever and an admirable judge of human nature."

"That he is," assented pa Sylvester.

"Being a judge of human nature doesn't pay grocery bills," remarked Mrs. John logically.

"Of course not, cousin Jennie," answered Marie, "but before you speak about the matter to Julia, be sure and know all concerning it. It would be a pity to cross her and then find out afterwards that you had made a mistake." And Marie sighed. She remembered what a fearful error had been committed in her own case.

"I believe they are becoming very much interested in each other," went on ma Sylvester.

"I have an idea they are too," agreed Marie.

"Where did they go to-night?" inquired pa Sylvester.

"They went to hear Dr. Latrobe lecture upon the bible," replied his wife.

"Here they come now!" exclaimed Marie, as she noticed two people cross the street.

In a few moments they had entered and were seated with the rest. For a moment there was a pause in the conversation.

Then Marie asked:

"How did you like Doctor Latrobe?"

"Pretty well," he answered. "I think he is as good as the average clergyman, although he imbibes many of their curious notions concerning theology."

"What do you mean by curious notions, Mr. Gordon?" asked ma Sylvester.

"Well, he believes God punishes people, and that the All-Wise, Beneficent Creator has a torturing place ready to receive a portion of humanity and listen to its moans and groans."

"Mr. Gordon, do you mean to say there is no future place of punishment?" asked ma Sylvester, severely.

"Comparatively speaking, there may be one—positively there is none," he answered, coolly.

"You are an infidel!" she cried. "What do you mean by the terms comparatively and positively?" she inquired.

"I will try and explain myself," he answered.

"By all means do so, Mr. Gordon," spoke up Mrs. Herbert, looking much interested in the subject.

"So far as our finite lives go," said Gordon, "we can only judge of the future by our past and present. Without happiness we could never know suffering, and without suffering we could never experience happiness; what is suffering to one person is happiness to another, and what may be happiness to the one may be suffering for the other. This proposition is demonstrated by every-day life around us; the howling, profane, indecent sinks of iniquity, filled

with drunkenness and crime, would seem to us a place of untold suffering and sorrow. We who tread the higher walks in life, shudder when we think of those creatures, and pity them, hoping that some day God will save them. We say they are everlastingly lost. To us such a state is one of both unhappiness and punishment; but are they really unhappy? Are they really punished? Do they suffer that intense anguish which in imagination, causes us to shudder? We are forced to admit that the majority are happy, and have as much enjoyment as they desire, or are capable of, and to place them in Heaven to-day would be to render them miserable.

For us who love what is high, noble, good and true, God prepares a state in which we will have all the happiness we are capable of. For those who love what is low, degrading, untrue and immoral, a state is created in which they will have all the enjoyment they are capable of. The one kind of happiness is so much superior to the other that the one state is called Heaven—the other Hell.

God leaves every man free to choose as he may desire, and so far from punishing any gives each one, unto whichever state he goes, all the happiness to be desired from that state. He is just, merciful, and so full of loving kindness, that he took upon himself human flesh and dwelt among men, in order that he might lead them into this highest state of happiness; and so great is the one above the other that he commends the one whilst he condemns the other. He likens the one to all that is bright, happy and beautiful, the other to all that is gloomy, dark and dreadful."

For a moment there was silence.

"Mr. Gordon," spoke up ma Sylvester, "you are an infidel; the bible teaches us that there are future rewards and punishments."

"In the old testament," went on Gordon, "there is scarcely an allusion to a future state of existence, let alone any reference to its rewards and punishments. In the New

Testament Jesus Christ used the strongest figurative language to demonstrate the plainest facts. He holds out, side by side, the good and bad—the happy and unhappy states. He tells us explicitly, what excludes us from the higher—what condemns us to the lower state. In an express description in one of the gospels of the disposition of humanity by The Great King hereafter, those things which lead us to heaven are mentioned, while those excluding us are not any given number of transgressions committed by us, but a failure to perform those acts which fit us for Heaven, such as the exercise of charity and self-denial. We are informed by Christ that if we give our needy brethren food, drink, clothing, and visit them in affliction and practice self-denial, we fit ourselves for the kingdom of Heaven, while the failure to do those things simply leave us in a condition unfitted for the enjoyment of that place, and we are necessarily reduced to an existence in the lower state, all through our own choice, because we prefer the happiness drawn from that most and are happier in doing evil than good."

"In order to illustrate the immeasurable difference between the two states, he not only paints the happiness and unhappiness of each in the most brilliant colors, but likens the immense space between them unto reward und punishment. The unhappiness of the one comes by comparison with the happiness of the other, rather than by any actual punishment. People in this world, seated upon the monument of virtue, look down upon the plain of vice and shiver at it's punishment. Are it's inhabitants a miserable lot of punished beings? Truth in this case answers no, just as emphatically as it answers yes, to the question: is not Virtue a far superior order of happiness to Vice?"

"Those are Mr. Metcalf's views, are they not, Mr. Gordon?" asked Rosa.

"I believe they are," he answered.

"And I am sure they are true," she said quietly.

"Rosa!" exclaimed ma Sylvester, "you have lost your

mind. You shall not hold *sich* infidel doctrines." Ma Sylvester, in her excitement again forgot her grammar.

"Aunt Sylvester, I can't help having my opinions," said the girl gently.

"But I don't allow young girls in my house to hold opinions without consulting me," she replied.

"You may lock me up, aunt Sylvester, but you cannot prevent my thinking—"

"But I can stop you from telling your thoughts," interrupted her aunt. "Don't you say any such things again."

"No, I will not," replied the girl, equally as gently as she did before.

In a few moments pa and ma Sylvester went in for the evening, leaving the young ladies and Frank on the piazza. The young people had become quite free and easy by this this time, and generally managed to be together a great deal.

"Julia," said Rosa, "we have him now, let's make him tell us all about it."

"All about what?" he asked in a surprised tone.

"Listen at you, you little hypocrite!" exclaimed Julia, looking archly at him. "Tell us all about it now."

"Really, I am at sea, I have no idea what you are alluding to—please tell me?"

He liked this young miss more and more. Her quaint, charming, piquant manners interested him no less than they piqued him at times; and when he asked her "please," a soft intonation characterized his request, which no one but this young miss of seventeen could command.

"Why the book you are writing—there is an account of it in the paper this evening," said Julia.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "I did not know you were alluding to that. Well, it is only to be a slight sketch of this country and its leading features."

"Are you going to give us a corner in it?" asked Julia, demurely.

"That depends," he smiled.

"On what?" inquired she.

"On how nice you are to me," he replied.

"Well, then, we will be so nice to you," she said, cocking her little slippered foot against the post unconsciously, and showing a model of curves and lines which would have caused an artist to sigh.

"You girls don't stick," he said, laughing. "You are very nice to a fellow until you get what you want, and then you shunt him off."

"We do no such thing!" cried Julia, indignantly.

"Oh, but you do," he went on. "The other day you wanted some rose-buds and you were both so nice and sweet; after you got them you were as cool as possible."

"But they died afterwards; we were real good as long as they remained fresh," said she.

"Well, if you desire to have a niche in this wonderful sketch, you must tell me something about yourselves," he said.

"Tell what?" asked Rosa, "If we have to tell you what to say, we had as well write our own histories ourselves."

"But nearly every one here has a sketch written of himself on the type-writer and hands it to me, begging that I will insert the whole, or make just such use of it as I may deem proper," he laughed.

"They don't!" exclaimed Julia.

"Yes, they do," he said. "I have two or three in my pocket now; of course, it is bad taste, and makes you feel disgusted with the parties who do it, unless you ask for it."

"Read some of them to us, won't you?" requested Julia.

"Wouldn't that be a breach of confidence?" he asked in reply.

"I hadn't thought of that."

"But," he proceeded, "I will tell you what is in one or

two of them without mentioning any names. Every one thinks that he is more or less a public character and has been instrumental in confering some benefit upon mankind. He prepares a personal sketch ot himself, telling you about his parents' birth as well as his own—"

"But, Mr. Gordon," interrupted Rosa, "do they not know that such facts can be of no possible interest to the public?"

"If they know such a thing, they fail sadly to recognize it," he went on. "Another informs you that he has accumulated a great deal of real estate in town, and that he began life as a saw-mill man; another that he has the finest house in town. Those men really deserving the most credit are least known and among the few from whom you are forced to demand information, and who invariably refuse to give it unless a reason accompanies the demand."

"How fond people are of seeing themselves in print," observed Julia. "Unless I accomplished something which would live after I had passed away I should hate to be mentioned publicly."

"All people have not your innate modesty, dear," said Rosa. "They want the world to imagine they are much greater than they really are."

"That is very foolish," remarked Gordon. "No one can deceive people for any great length of time, because they are sure to be found out. The exposure must be extremely disagreeable, to say nothing of the disgrace. But young ladies, it is nearly twelve o'clock, and ma Sylvester will be calling for you directly. Go and get some beauty sleep."

"We flatter ourselves that we do not need it," said Julia, as they went in and bade him good evening.

Rosa thought a great deal of Metcalf that night between her hour of prayer and sleep. She wondered what he was doing at this time and whether he would return the following morning safe from his trip. "He is the manliest

man I ever saw," she soliloquized, as she placed her hand under her pillow. She smiled in thinking of the kissing scene. Of course he was rude—very mean—and should never have been guilty of such a thing; but could he have been so nice if he had not kissed her? Could she have respected him as much if he had failed to keep his word? Of course the idea of her being in love with him was absurd. How could she be in love with any man, unless he had told her of his love and asked her to be his wife? Yet, the bare mention of his name, the very thought of him caused her heart to throb with a sensation that would have been positively painful, but for its pleasure. She recalled several damaging statements heard about him lately, but did not believe any of those nasty things said, and experienced a positive feeling of pride swell in her bosom when she thought of his elegant, cool way of carrying himself, and his immeasurable superiority in everything to those who talked about him. As unconsciousness gradually seized her she fancied he was standing over her with his quiet, easy smile — looking down upon her in that earnest, eager way, which always caused such queer little thrills to creep over her.

CHAPTER VIII.

The evening shadows were fast deepening into the darkness of night around the tenements of Stoddart Court House, as a small boy traversed the rickety sidewalk up the main street with a yellow paper in his hand. He was carrying a telegram to Major J. W. Ruskin, the leading lawyer of that section of country, and commonwealth's attorney as well.

At that very moment Major Ruskin was seated in his library, reading the evening papers, contented with the world and in a good humor with everyone. The world around Stoddart Court House had treated him well. Twenty years ago he had landed there with a beautiful young wife and twenty-five cents in his pocket. By dint of dogged application and close attention to business, but mainly through the countenance and patronage of Mrs. Nannie Metcalf, he had accumulated a fine estate and gotten a lucrative practice. He drove his pair of blood bays, gave fine entertainments to his neighbors, and lived in an elegant residence on the outskirts of the place. His wife had been a great beauty in her young days, and even now, some forty years had not completely destroyed the remains of it. She had made the major an admirable help-meet, and as she handed him the telegram, accompanied the act with a loving smile and bright look.

"Any bad news?" she asked, as he read the dispatch.

"No, you can read it yourself," he said, handing it to her.

She took it, and read as follows.

"SHIRLY, N. C., May 29th, 1884.

MAJOR J. W. RUSKIN,

Stoddart Court House, N. C.

Chas. Metcalf says meet him half past one o'clock to-night at Greystone Lodge.

FRANK GORDON."

"Charlie Metcalf is in trouble of some sort," said his wife, looking up from the telegram." Go right out and see what you can do for him. There is something strange about him. I never could divine why he should have left that lovely young wife of his. She is so beautiful, so bright and nice."

"He has a good reason for it," said he. "Metcalf is not a man to leave his wife without a reason."

"You always said that," she retorted, rather petulantly, "but you never would tell it."

"I have no right to tell my client's secrets," he spoke, with an amused smile.

"You ought to tell your wife everything," she said. "I will have the carriage ordered. You can remain at the Lodge all night, as Sue Metcalf will take the best care of you."

"Very good," he replied, as he rose to prepare himself for the journey.

In a few moments he was bowling along towards Greystone Lodge, whilst the shadows of the moon played hide and seek about the roadside and over the horses' backs. He tried to think what Charlie Metcalf wanted with him. The time had been when he would have known it was some money trouble; but of late years Charlie had ceased to trouble any one on that score. He concluded then it was something connected with the lady Metcalf had suddenly married some ten years ago, and as suddenly left.

Major Ruskin had long been the legal adviser of the Metcalf people and knew most of their family secrets. He alone, except Charlie and his so-called wife, knew why Metcalf had left and taken the upbraiding of the world rather than remain with her, and in his heart had admired the man for sacrificing himself to save this woman from untold trouble—her reputation from the comment and criticism of curious, prying strangers. And he had kept the secret well, too, never mentioning it to a human soul except Metcalf, and only to him when it was absolutely necessary. He valued highly the friendship and good opinion of Charlie's mother, whose kindness in early life to him often sealed his mouth, when otherwise he would have doubtless rated the young man soundly for his extravagance and folly in matters concerning money.

He was a little surprised on reaching Greystone Lodge to find that Charlie Metcalf was not there. James informed him that he was expected; he, too, had received a telegram, but was as much at sea as Major Ruskin as to the cause of Charlie's sudden visit.

"Major, have you an idea what is the matter?" he asked, when they were seated in the library.

"I haven't the ghost of an idea," he replied. "At first I imagined that he might be in some money trouble, but I soon thought that I must be mistaken, because for the past two or three years he has been particularly free from such."

"I believe it is something concerning his wife which brings him here so quickly," suggested James Metcalf.

"Why do you think that?" inquired the Major, feigning surprise.

"Because, that whole affair has been such a curious one," he replied. "Just think! Charlie married this beautiful, wealthy young girl and in a few months, without apparent ryme or reason, left her and refused to live with her afterwards and won't tell anyone but you why he acted so infernally strange. Of course the boy had some ground for behaving in such a queer manner, but he might have told us something about it. Many people think that he wilfully deserted her."

"How do you know that he ever told me why he left?" asked Major Ruskin, calmly.

"Oh, Charlie told you. I am sure of that from a remark he made to me," answered James. "And Major, I would be so glad if you were to let me know the reason. I will never say one word about it. His wife is so nice in every way; so irreproachable in her conduct, that I cannot divine why he should have left her—yet there must be some reason for it."

"I will say that he had ample grounds for his conduct, James," said Major Ruskin. "For the present, I am not at liberty to say anything as to the cause."

"I wish you would endeavor to persuade him to tell me when he comes to-night," said the other.

"I will advise him to do so," replied the Major, frankly.

The subject of this discussion at this moment was just getting from the train at Roland some four miles from Greystone Lodge. Burwell, the groom, took his traps and escorted him to the buggy waiting for him on the off side of the station-house. Whilst his valise was being put away he asked Burwell a question or two about his horses, with reference to the time it would take them to convey him to Greystone Lodge.

"It is now half past one," said Charlie, looking at his watch. "You can take me there by two o'clock, can't you?"

"To be sho' sah, I ken," he replied.

"Burwell, is Spotty Dimple in good condition," he asked.

"Prime sah—same ez a young ole har'," answered the darkey.

"Well, I have to return here by three o'clock to catch the east-bound train. I want some one to take Spotty on my return, as I shall ride him back. Who can I get?"

"Lem'me see," said he, scratching his head. "Mars Charlie, I tell you what do; you knows de way to de Lodge, you drive thar en I will stay here an' git Spotty when you come back. De Hamiltonia horse an' Charlie boy—de same you used to drive—is hooked in to-night, en dey take you to de Lodge 'fo' you ken say scat."

Metcalf was soon seated in the light vehicle and having gathered his reins, gave the horses the word go. He knew every inch of the road to Greystone Lodge, and was certain that he could cover the four miles in twenty minutes, unless the team had lost their power of traveling. They could trot their mile in three minutes on good road, and easily keep it up for five miles. He made the first half a mile in five minutes, over hill and stone, when he came to the low grounds along which the road ran next to the railroad for two miles; on reaching it he let the team out, and they seemed to fly until he came to the railroad crossing, which

brought him into the Box Hill estate belonging to his uncle, Alex. Metcalf. In about five minutes after passing the rock wall around Box Hill, he drew up before the heavy stone piazza at Greystone Lodge.

"Is that you, Charlie?" asked his brother, coming from the door.

"Yes—send me a boy to take these horses—whoa Frank!—is Ruskin here?"

"Yes—wait a moment, until I call Charlie Alderson."

Metcalf quietly remained in the buggy until the servant came.

"What caused you to come so suddenly?" inquired his brother.

"Why, I was obliged to see Ruskin a moment and had no time to wait," he answered, as they entered the hall. "I have to return on that three o'clock train and it is nearly two now."

"Good gracious, man!" exclaimed his brother, "you can't do it unless you go directly back."

"Yes I can," he returned. "Let me have Spotty Dimple to ride back to Roland at fifteen minutes to three and I will get through snugly."

"Well then," said his brother, "I will give the orders about Spotty, while you go in and see the Major."

"And James, mind you don't let anyone disturb us until I ask for you," he called out as his brother's figure receded.

"So you are here once more," spoke the major, as he entered the library.

"Yes, how are you, major?"

"I am very well—may be older than when you last saw me," he replied. "I heard you inform James a moment ago that you had to return at once, so if you will state what you want with me, I will give you my earnest attention."

"I wanted to post you as to something, and advise

with you concerning a matter which has sprung up recently."

"I am all attention," he said calmly, seating himself.

"I have been in Shirly for a month, and for some unknown reason to me," proceeded Charlie, "a Doctor Griswold has been making inquiries about my character. He saw Doctor Harry Campbell, who advised him to write to you. He wants to find out something about my 'woman scrape,' as he terms it, an wrote you concerning it to-day. I wanted to be sure that you told him nothing, and also to ask your advice about—about—"

"Well, about what?" asked Major Ruskin, as Charlie stammered a little.

"About marrying in my present position," he blurted out, blushing furiously.

"So you have fallen in love at last, have you?"

"Yes major, I am hard hit."

"Who is the young lady?"

"A Miss Rosa Reynolds. Her family reside in Etna at present."

"Any relation to the Reynolds who live about Lancing Court House?" he asked.

"Well, yes," replied Metcalf. "Her father came from that family."

"Then isn't any discussion unnecessary? Don't you know you can't marry that girl?" he asked, gazing coolly into Metcalf's face.

"And why not that girl," he demanded, with a slight inflexion of irritation in his voice.

"Do you think your people would sanction or allow such an alliance? Wasn't her father a working man?"

"He was a man who earned his livlihood by the sweat of his brow," replied Charlie. "But you know there is such a thing as loving a girl enough to marry her in the teeth of your family, *nolens volens*." And a peculiar, grim, set expression came over the face of The Bruisin' Lad.

"Do you love that girl enough to do that thing?" asked he.

"Yes, I do," he answered.

"Then, if that's your determination, a discussion is not unnecessary," he said.

"Can I marry without a divorce from the other woman?" asked Metcalf.

"And not commit bigamy, you mean?" he asked in reply.

"Yes."

"Then I should most emphatically say you can," he said. "Your marriage was a void one *ab initio*, and being such you are free to marry Miss Reynolds to-morrow, if she will have you."

"If she will have me!" exclaimed Metcalf, "I have never spoken a word of love to her yet and don't know that I will; so I cannot say what she will do on that score."

"I should not have said anything about that," went on the Major, "but you are so accustomed to having what you wish—of making people go as you will—that I thought it probable you had not taken such a thing into consideration. Though you are not legally bound to the lady whom the world says is your wife, and are free to contract any alliance you may choose, yet under the circumstances, any young girl would pause and consider well before marrying you."

"If she loved me properly, I am sure she would marry me," he said proudly. "I would not give a fig for a woman who could not give up the last friend she had to marry the man of her choice."

"Well, there may be some who are willing to do it," asserted the Major; "When a woman loves a man, there is no saying what amount of foolish things she will not commit to marry him. I think your position is one of peculiar hardship, and if the truth was known you would not only be exonerated, but have the sympathy of everyone. My

advice to you now is to simply deny you were ever married in the past. Of course there will be some people who cannot understand it, yet as a matter of fact you have never been married, although at one time you believed you were. The statute of Pennsylvania bars any prosecution for bigamy, so far as your former wife is concerned, because more than five years have elapsed since her marriage with you. So now I should say if your marriage with Miss Reynolds is necessary for your happiness, and she is willing, by all means consummate it as early as possible. Of course, when you address her, tell her all; or I would advise you to acquaint her parents with the state of affairs before you even speak with her."

I shall certainly not be guilty of anything dishonorable," said Metcalf, looking steadily at Major Ruskin, "I shall tell her people the whole truth and not withhold a single fact."

"And her people will doubtless raise all manner of objections, when you do," he replied.

"Why so?" asked Charlie.

"Can't you see?" inquired the other, "you have the reputation of being a married man, and though those immediately concerned will know the truth, yet the world at large will not; such an existing state of things will cause more or less disagreeable comment which not even her family will stand, though an alliance with the Metcalf's is the result."

"If she loves me and is willing to marry me, I am sure both sides of the house will have to put up with it," he said, smiling grimly.

"Where is the lady now whom you believed to be your wife at one time?" he inquired.

"She is in Maryland."

"What is she doing?"

"Staying with her aunt."

"Metcalf, she is a wonderful woman," he said. "Her

conduct has been irreproachable except for this one thing; she was very much admired at the springs last summer."

"I know it; had I loved her, I would have stood by her until death. I made a sad, sad mistake in ever having married her when I cared nothing for her."

"Your brother James asked me to tell him why you refused to live with that woman," went on the major. "I told him that I would advise you to let him know the reason. You had better acquaint him with the truth."

Metcalf thought a moment.

"After I am gone," he said, "you tell him all about it, won't you? I shall not have time to-night."

"Of course I will," he replied, "and I think you act wisely in allowing me to do so."

"And please shut up that infernal, prying doctor if he writes," demanded Charlie.

"Don't have any fears on that score," laughed the major, "I will—"

"Charlie," interrupted James, "Spotty is ready and you have only fifteen minutes to make it in."

"You can't make it Metcalf," said the major.

"Yes, I must," replied he, rising from his seat. "James, Major Ruskin will tell you all."

"I am so glad, Charlie," he said. "Come and see me when you have more time."

"I will," said he, seizing his hat and rushing for the front piazza, followed by the other two.

The horse which was to carry him to Ronald in thirteen minutes was a large piebald animal, of wonderful power and build. Standing in the silvery light of the moon he was a perfect picture, from the small expressive ears to the high placed tail-bone on his rump. When standing, his nostril exhibited a portion of its deep red membrane lining, and was as thin and delicate as a wafer. His neck was beautifully arched, sloping easily towards the highstanding withers, whilst his back was almost level and very short.

Metcalf had ridden Spotty Dimple at many a tournament and knew his powers well.

When he announced himself ready to mount, the groom began to wipe the saddle skirts with a wet sponge. Scarcely had he commenced his task before the horse exhibited decided signs of restiveness.

"Spotty Dimple thinks you are fixing him for a tournament," remarked James Metcalf to the groom.

In a minute all was ready. Metcalf mounted, and the moment his legs pressed the horse's sides, the latter knew it was the Bruisin' Lad, and began to corvet and plunge, whilst the groom adjusted the stirrup leathers. When the latter stood aside and Metcalf loosened the reins, the horse bounded forward, almost unseating Charlie.

The gentlemen and groom watched him as he disappeared down the carriage way towards the front gate.

"Is the gate open, Alderson?" asked James, of the groom.

"No sah—but Mars Charlie ain't a-caring," answered he.

They moved out a little to get a better view of the vanishing horseman. As he neared the gate the horse swerved to the left and took the palings at a flying leap.

"Hi—jes' look thar—I sed so, Mars Charlie took 'im ober samer den a crow could fly," said the groom, in an exultant manner.

"Reckon he will make it in time, Alderson?" asked the Major.

"To be sho' Mars Major, 'case ole Spotty Dimple so glad to git De Bruisin' Lad on him once mo'," replied he, as the gentlemen moved into the house.

The Bruisin' Lad well knew what powers Spotty had if he was handled properly. As soon as the fence was cleared he began to pull the horse down to his work. Spotty was in for fun and disposed to do his best on the start. Metcalf could feel his powerful under-jaw working

to catch the shank of the bit in his mouth; at last he accomplished it. He bolted forward with renewed vigor, but by a peculiar twist of his elbow, The Bruisin' Lad dislodged it and regained possession of his mouth. By this time they had reached an ascent composed of round stones and gravel known as "The Rocky Knoll;" the round rocks and gravel flew in every direction as the powerful animal plunged forward heedless of all except his own wild excitement and the fact that The Bruisin' Lad was astride him; he was getting down to sober, cool work fairly well now. On, on he flew around the rock wall inclosing Box Hill grounds, scaring the birds from the lilac bushes as he swept past them; on, on through the beautiful, rolling lands of the plantation until the overseer's quarters were reached: here Metcalf ran his hand over the horse's shoulder, as white flecks of foam flew back over him every time the noble animal tossed his head.

"You'll make it, Spotty Dimple," he muttered, in a carressing tone as he checked him slightly in his mad career.

They were nearing the railroad now. Metcalf heard the train whistle for the crossing; he knew if he checked up much time would be lost, so raising himself in his stirrups, he shouted:

"Go!"

The horse bounded forward as if he was shot; it was the old, old signal The Bruisin' Lad used to give in starting him on a race. He reached out his arched neck until it seemed to the rider that he was almost lying flat upon the ground; as he came within a few feet of the crossing he cleared the track at a tremendous leap and whirled to his left, almost throwing the Bruisin' Lad from the saddle. They were now on the low-ground, level road, with almost a straight shoot to the station. Charlie knew he must outstrip the train to take a passage upon it; Spotty seemed to understand it as well, for he chafed fearfully as Metcalf

pulled him in, until they were opposite Wilton, about one mile from Roland. He was just behind the rear coach, and once more he stood in his stirrups and shouted :

"Go!"

Once more the noble beast went forward with increased speed ; as he tore onwards, gradually overtaking the steaming engine, both rider and horse seemed to grow wild ; cheer after cheer rose from Metcalf as Spotty Dimple craned out his arched neck, laid his ears close to his head and rushed forward like a streak of lightning. When the train began to check up for the station, Metcalf went ahead and took Spotty Dimple up at the platform as the train came thundering around the curve. The great horse's lungs worked like a pair of bellows as Metcalf dismounted and the blankets were thrown over him.

"He made it, didn't he Mars Charlie?" asked Burwell, throwing his arm around the horse's neck.

"He did it in eleven minutes and a half," said he, looking at his watch and handing the groom some loose coin. "Take care of him and tell James never to sell him."

In a few moments Metcalf was arranging his berth in the sleeper, preparatory to his journey back to Shirly.

CHAPTER IX.

"Mr. Gordon, I am shocked at you! I am surprised at you! I am just as mad as I can be! I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" exclaimed Julia, as Gordon stood between her and the parlor door to prevent her exit.

The foregoing exclamatory remarks dealt out so unspairingly by the usually quiet Julia Sylvester, were

uttered about four or five days after Metcalf's return from Greystone Lodge.

"Let me by, Mr. Gordon!" cried Julia, imperiously.

"Not until you hear what I have to say," he replied calmly.

"You know you don't mean a word you say," she went on. "You have no right to say such things to me."

"Julia Sylvester—I love you," he said, his lips quivering perceptibly as he uttered the words. "Untutored as you are, young as you may be, unbelieving as you say you are, all the same you are the only woman I ever cared for, or who could make my heart beat faster. From almost the first moment I ever knew you I have loved you, and you have shown me very conclusively that I am nothing to you. None the less I want some day to call you wife."

"The idea of your talking to me in such a manner! I am only seventeen and have not left school. Had you really cared for me, I am sure you would have waited until I was a—a—grown lady. My mother doesn't even allow me to receive visitors yet."

"I can't help all that," he said.

"You need not have tried to make fun of me," she proceeded. "Because you were in the house and saw me daily, you ought not to have taken advantage of such opportunities to follow me around so conspicuously, to cause people to think I was in love with you, and try to make fun of me by telling me that a man of the world like you, could love—I mean, care for a chit like me. It is downright mean."

Gordon had borne a great deal on account of his love for the girl, and her youth; he rose in arms at her continued accusations. In the excitement of the moment, Julia had forgotten much. She failed to recognize that Gordon had not intruded himself upon her, and that his frequent attentions and companionship had not appeared unacceptable to her.

"Miss Julia," he said, with a fixed expression upon his face, "I am sorry you should think that I have endeavored to lessen your amusement in any way, or keep others from paying you attention. I did not intend to do that. In the future I shall try not to intrude upon you in any way; and now you can pass out."

He opened the door, but she did not move a step. Womanlike, she stood perfectly still, twisting her hands around her apron. Gordon waited a moment until she seemed not disposed to go, and then marched out himself.

That was the thing above all others which Julia did not wish to be done. She had become so accustomed to Gordon's obedience to her least wish, that any expression of ideas on his part not coinciding with her views of the fitness of things, was rank treason on his part. Way down in her sweet, true little heart, she had already been building castles in the air. She had pictured to herself how the nice, agreeable Gordon should continue on her devoted admirer for several years to come, and when she had finished her round of gaities, had a good square fling at society, then Gordon would throw himself at her feet, and all would go as merry as a marriage-bell.

Now all had been spoilt by his untimely declaration. Of course sooner or later ma would have to know it, and then there would be a scene.

"He is so hateful!" she exclaimed. "I don't like him one bit!"

Standing there on the floor his fine face came before her, with his curling chestnut hair, chiseled features, agreeable, charming manners, and her heart succumbed. Throwing herself upon the sofa, she burst into tears. It was in this position that Rosa found her.

"Why, Julia, dear!" she cried, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing," replied she, endeavoring to hide her face.

"What has happened?"

"Nothing."

"Julia, something has happened," said Rosa. "Didn't I meet Mr. Gordon rushing upstairs, his face white with anger? And then I come in here and find you crying. Tell me, did you and he have a quarrel?"

"I hate him," she cried. "He is so mean and disagreeable! he is downright nasty!"

"Yes, he is, Julia," said Rosa, her face assuming a serious hue. "He must be all that if he does anything to make you cry. Julia! I almost hate him."

"Who said he made me cry?" she asked, her eyes fairly blazing. "Who cares whether you hate him or not? He is twice as nice as long, dried-up, old Mr. Metcalf, and you shan't talk about him so. Rosa, you always were so disagreeable!"

Rosa laughed outright with that musical voice of hers, which in laughter always wound up in a melodious kind of who-ee, sounding like the chiming of bells over the hills and far away.

"Julia," she went on, "I was only jesting; I think Mr. Gordon is just as nice as he can be, and I am not alone in my opinion."

"Who else thinks so?" demanded Julia, pulling at her handkerchief.

"You," she answered, looking her squarely in the face. "Julia, Mr. Gordon loves you, and dear if you care for him be careful how you deal with him."

"I don't care about dealing with him at all," retorted she, flashing up again.

"Yes you do, dear," returned Rosa, quietly.

"Rosa, don't tell mama about it now."

"About what, dear?" asked she, gently.

"Oh, about—I mean—oh, don't you know?" she asked, innocently.

"I think I understand," answered Rosa, pressing her hand. "Mr. Gordon proposed to you, didn't he?"

"He didn't mean it," answered she. "He could not care for a chit like me."

"I think he does love this chit very much," said Rosa, placing her arms affectionately around her. "This little thing is not aware how attractive she is growing."

Rosa was right there. One of Julia's chief attractions was her unconsciousness of her many charms. Hitherto she had been treated so much like a child that she was not aware she was fast budding into lovely womanhood with many fascinating qualities and rare prophetical marks of beauty. Gordon was quick to discover it, at all events, and would have given almost anything to possess this opening rosebud.

"Julia," remarked her cousin, "I have just heard some disagreeable news; mother has written me to come home at once."

"You don't say so!" cried Julia, rousing herself, "I am so sorry; can't you persuade her to let you stay longer?"

"No, I have already overstaid my time, and she needs me," replied she.

"When will you leave?"

"To-morrow morning," she said.

"And what will Mr. Metcalf say?" inquired Julia, demurely.

"Oh, he won't mind," she answered, smiling, while a tell-tale blush mantled her cheek "I must go now and tell aunt Sylvester about it. By-the-way, have you heard how uncle Collins Farmer is to-day?"

"Yes—mama was over there this morning and on her return said he was better."

The girls went out of the parlor and just as they started towards the dining-room Metcalf came in.

"Where is Gordon?" he asked.

"He went up to his room," answered Rosa, smiling in spite of herself.

"Rosa is going home, Mr. Metcalf," spoke up Julia.

"You are not!" he exclaimed, in a kind of dead blank voice which sounded like so much music in Rosa's ears.

"Yes, I have to go, unless aunt Sylvester says I must stay," she said.

"Then we will see if something cannot be done with aunt Sylvester," he laughed, as he proceeded up stairs.

He went at once in search of Gordon, intending to have it out with him about writing a history of Shirley and not acquainting him with the fact. When he entered the room the man's face looked so woe-begone as he sat in the chair, that Metcalf completely forgot about the history.

"Why, what's up, old chap?" he asked, as he took a seat beside him.

"Oh nothing," replied Frank.

"My dear fellow, your very voice betrays you," said Charlie. "Something very important has happened. Tell me what it is, and if I can be of any use to you, of course you can command me."

"Well, I had a racket with Miss Sylvester."

"What kind?" inquired Charlie.

"I can hardly say," answered Frank. "But I know this much; she gave me the worst tongue-lashing I ever had in my life."

"You don't say so?" cried Charlie. "Tell me all about it."

Gordon related everything that happened, while Charlie listened with the utmost astonishment and interest. When the former's recital was over, the latter leaned back in his chair and laughed heartily.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Frank, growling. "I don't see anything very funny about it."

"But there is a ridiculous side to it," said Metcalf, laughing again.

"What is it?"

"That you should be so completely floored by a young

miss of seventeen," replied Metcalf. "That Frank Gordon, the handsome, agreeable literateur, accustomed to bringing the lovliest of the fair to his feet, should beg and sue for the love of a school-girl, and in return for the asking get a good sound rating, is just a little peculiar; don't you think so, Gordon?"

"I rather think it is," he assented.

"But cheer up—'faint heart never won fair lady,' even if she was but a kid," said Charlie, as he performed his toilet for dinner. "If the little Miss Sylvester takes all of this wind out of your sails, what will become of you when the large Mrs. Sylvester demands an explanation? She doesn't like you so much anyway."

"I will be totally demolished when both attempt to rend me," he said.

"That will never be," remarked Metcalf, paring his nails.

"Why?" asked Frank.

"Because that young lady is made of that sterner stuff which has no better sense than to be true," he answered. "And if your respected future mother-in-law should raise groundless objections, your fair Dulcinea will quickly give her to understand where she is to stand. Gordon, that's a true little woman."

"I know that, Metcalf, as well as you," he said, "but she is so fond of her mother, that I dislike to think of any difference between them."

"Don't give yourself any uneasiness on that score," said Charlie, "when ma Sylvester learns that she cannot pilot the ship any longer, and finds out what a clever, nice boy you are, she will be thoroughly agreeable, and give you some of the fair Julia's bread and preserves. Let's get our dinner."

Going out they met the ladies on the piazza; Metcalf put at ma Sylvester instantaneously about Rosa's staying longer.

"Really, Mr. Metcalf, I could not take the responsibility upon myself of causing her to prolong her visit. Her mother has reasons for her return, I dare say, and might not like her staying," said she, with a cold, metalic ring in her voice.

"Write her mother that you are going to keep her another week, anyway," urged he, as he felt a great lump rising in his throat.

"I don't feel at liberty to do that," she said, decidedly, as if there was an end of the matter.

So there was nothing for Metcalf to do but to proceed to his dinner When he reached the Langdon House, he asked for the proprietoress. Miss Langdon came out in her usual methodical way, and asked what he desired.

"I wish to settle my bill," he said, simply.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, as if taken by surprise.

"Give me a receipt, if you please," he demanded.

"Certainly," she returned, "I will hand it to you as you go out from dinner."

As we have intimated before, Miss Eliza Langdon was an eminently just woman. That afternoon she drove down to Doctor Griswold's office; entering she found him busily engaged writing.

"James, Mr. Metcalf paid his board like a gentleman," she said.

"He did!" he said, as if thunder-struck. "I am surprised at that; I had written to a lawyer in Stoddart county to find out all about him."

"James, I don't think I will ask him to leave," she went on. "The more I see of him, the more I like him."

"Lize, you run a great risk keeping him," he said irritably. "You are nursing a viper in your bosom. If you are stung don't run to me for cure."

"All right, James, I will get some other doctor," she replied, taking him literally. "I shall not discharge Mr. Metcalf. Good morning, James."

"Morning, Lize, morning," he answered, returning to his work.

Miss Lize returned to her home feeling that she had fully discharged her duty.

CHAPTER X.

Mrs. Elmira Reynolds, Rosa's mother, lived at Etna with her aunt, Mrs. Mary Gooch. Mrs. Reynolds had lost her husband some years ago, and was in straightened circumstances. This aunt owned a home which she ungraciously allowed as a shelter to Mrs. Reynolds and her children, never forgetting to remind even the youngest of them that she had full power to send them away whenever she might desire to do so. Mrs. Reynolds' position was very irksome there, and doubtless she would have left long ago, only her brothers, who assisted in supporting her objected, because they were sure if she would knuckle sufficiently to Mrs. Gooch, that the latter would make her the residuary legatee of her last will and testament; so she bore it all the best she could on the children's account.

Mrs. Reynolds married when she was only fourteen years of age, and at this time looked extremely young. She was rather good-looking than otherwise, with dark hair and eyes, short face and small figure. She was very bright and possessed more than the usual modicum of mind; but Mrs. Reynolds could not be trusted; there was a sharp, vascilating kind of shrewdness and cynicism about her which boded no good for any one towards whom her good wishes did not run. She could treat you with suave politeness and the utmost hospitality to your face, yet fire a powerful load of grape-shot in the way of abuse at you behind your back.

She brooked no opposition whatever; was self-willed and vindictive with even her own children whom she loved well, and cared for tenderly.

Rosa had been home some days and detailed over and over again the many things said and done at Shirly during her visit.

"Rose," asked her mother, one morning, "who writes you those letters which you receive every day?"

"Mr. Metcalf, mama," she answered, not looking up from her work.

"Your aunt Mary is very uneasy about your receiving them; she thinks you ought not to get them," her mother said.

"Aunt Mary is so curious," said Rose, petulantly. "What business is it of her's if I do have a letter from any one? I am sure it will not injure her."

"But you forget," spoke Mrs. Reynolds, with a sarcastic smile, "that you dwell under her roof. As you live in her house, doesn't that entitle her to the right of knowing everything you do? She thinks so, at all events."

"But I don't," replied the girl, flatly. "I don't intend either that she shall know. What a dreadful thing it is to be dependent upon any one. Mama, I am going to work. Anyting is better than having you always pressed. I can at least earn something."

This was a noble and laudable sentiment in this seventeen-year-old young lady, but perfectly in keeping with the genuinenes of her character. With such people as Rosa, dependence is far more irksome than honest toil.

"What can you do?" inquired her mother.

"I would prefer some situation in a millinery establishment. You can very often find something to do in such places."

"But you won't make much," said her mother; "the young ladies who go in such places are poorly paid and there are so many desirous of obtaining situations,"

"Nevertheless, I am going to try," she said, "to get a place. One of the girls at Miss Limestone's establishment informed me that she was sure I could find employment there; of course, the remuneration will be small, but I may be able to rise in time and command a better salary."

"There is another objection," said her mother, leaning down to bite off a piece of refractory thread, "you are thrown in contact with all kinds of people; that is more or less trying always on young ladies unaccustomed to publicity."

Mrs. Reynolds was clearly right in this view. One of the most touchingly sad spectacles in this world is to see a young girl forced to earn her bread in one of those public places—brought into daily contact with every class of people, and notice that innate dawn of delicacy and gentle refinement swept away, leaving feminine chastity and virtue almost bare. But few ladies can pass this trying ordeal and retain those softer, gentler touches so dear and fascinating to the sterner sex.

"I understand you mama," she said. "I appreciate your views on that subject, and if I secure a situation, will try and always be the same natural girl."

"I don't think anything will hurt you dear, because you are so good and sweet. I—"

"Sister!" sang out a voice from the next room.

"Well Joe, what do you want?" asked Rosa.

"Aunt Mary says for you to come and see her," replied a small individual, appearing at the door.

Josephine, called Joe by the family for the sake of brevity, was a little girl some seven or eight years old. Everybody had discovered that she was a miracle of brightness, but no one ever found her a miracle of goodness. She was undoubtedly a precocious individual mentally, and astonished everyone around by her bright rejoinders.

"What does Aunt Mary want?" asked Rosa.

"How can I inform you unless she told me," she replied.

"You are always so smart!" said her sister, with a sarcastic fling in her voice.

"Don't say smart," retorted Joe with a curl on her lip. "It is so common. Say bright or clever."

"Don't speak in that manner about your sister, Joe," said her mother reprovingly.

"I am not speaking about her at all. I am speaking to her," she replied.

"And you don't know what aunt Mary wants?" asked Rosa.

"No, I do not," she returned. "I think if you want to know, the wisest course is to go and find out, sister!" and Joe looked up as if a bright idea just entered her head, "can you and mama sit this way?"

Mrs. Reynold and the eldest sister looked towards her at once, as she perched herself upon a chair. Throwing out her legs on a level with her seat, she turned both toes of her feet inwards, until they touched each other on a straight line. Looking triumphantly around, she exclaimed:

"I'll bet you all you can't do that!"

Rosa burst into a peal of laughter.

"Joe!" cried her mother, rising from her seat and rushing toward her, "you are insane! Get off that chair this instant!"

Joe ceased her contortion act, slid from the chair, and scampered off as fast as her two feet could carry her, to avoid a collision with her mother's open hand.

"Did you ever see such a child?" laughed her mother.

"She's awful," said Rosa. "But mama, she is very sweet and funny. Her little tricks are really amusing."

"Rosie, go and see what your aunt wants," her mother said. "But let me know when you return."

"Very good mama," she replied, as she went out of the room.

Mrs. Gooch was a relic of the ante-bellum days, and like many old people of her stamp believed the world was all wrong now-a-days because things were changed. She constantly reminded those around how fast and disgustingly rapid everybody was now, especially the young ladies. We often wonder according to her views what the girls did in her young days. To everything they said or did now, she would remark: "we didn't do that when I was a girl."

Neither did they have electricity in all its branches then, yet the world would be in a sad plight in this day without it. Progression is the order of this generation, and science is being grappled more successfully every day. This is the natural and logical result of God's appearance on earth, and the farther Christianity extends, the greater will be the natural development to man. Mrs. Gooch did not exactly see it in this light, and thought the world fast tending towards moral and physical destruction.

"My dear, I desire to speak with you a moment," she said, when Rosa entered her room upstairs.

"Yes, aunt Mary," she replied, standing in front of her.

"Sit down, Rosa," she went on. "Girls have changed sadly since my day. When I was one, if any of my elders sent for me I came at once and sat a little way off, ready to hear what they had to say."

"Yes, aunt Mary," said the girl, seating herself on one of her feet in that peculiar female way, on the front edge of a chair.

"I hear a gentleman has been writing to you—what do you mean by allowing such a thing?" she asked, looking severely over her spectacles at her grand-neice.

A flush spread the girl's cheek, not of shame at any act of her own, but of irritation at her aunt's supposition that

she would allow anything wrong to be done. In plain parlance, Rosa was angry. But like all true-hearted ladies, her anger was ladylike. Although perfectly sincere, open and honest, Rosa inherited a large bit of her mother's temper without the latter's *gaucheries*, in exhibiting it.

"Aunt Mary, I don't think you have any right to be asking me about such things," said Rosa, making every effort to control herself properly. "I have told mama all about it and she did not object."

That was a direct throw down of the gauntlet on her part. Don't you know her aunt took it up!

She jobbed her knitting needle angrily through her sock, placed the work and ball of yarn on a chair near, pushed her spectacles back on her head, and, straightening herself up, looked Rosa squarely in the face. The latter gave her interest for interest in the way of looks.

"You are saucy!" she exclaimed.

"I don't mean to be."

"Then you've got a wonderful knack of doing what you don't mean," retorted the old lady. "You are living in my house, and I have both the right and power to turn you out any moment that I see a cause to. If I can do that I can surely inquire what you are doing in this house."

The girl was expecting just such an outbreak, and was in a measure prepared for it.

"Aunt Mary," she said, wincing under the thrust with quivering lips, "you have a right to say who shall stay in your house and who shall not. But I am here under my mother's care and direction, and responsible to her alone. What arrangements she has with you I do not inquire into, because such a course would be impertinence on my part; but I shall not answer each and every inquiry concerning my affairs in this way, unless it is relevant to your matters. I have gotten several letters from Mr. Charlie Metcalf, and I suppose I will hear again."

"Then you stop him from writing to you at once!" she cried. "The idea of your speaking in such a manner to me! You must be losing your mind—though to be sure, girls of this day have but little to lose! Mind now, if I hear of any more letters coming, then out you go! This house bears a respectable name."

"I shall certainly not do anything to tarnish its name," said Rosa, with a rather scornful tone of voice. "You forget yourself strangely, aunt Mary! The idea of my ever doing anything to cause your house to suffer in name or fame is absurd! And I want to say this, too! You shall not insult me in this fashion again. If you do, I will leave your house without being requested."

"Tut—tut—tut!" cried her aunt. "Where are those letters Mr. Metcalf wrote you?"

"I have them."

"Then bring them to me," she said, reaching out her hand as if Rosa had them in her lap.

"I am not going to show them to you, Aunt Mary," she replied. "There is nothing in them that could not be seen by anyone. They simply tell me how uncle Collins is, and what is going on at aunt Sylvester's house, but I object to showing letters I receive, unless it is my duty to do so."

"Leave my room," said her aunt, pointing towards the door. She was almost choked with anger.

Stately, with a dignified step and the air of a princess, Rosa left the apartment.

She went at once to her room, and seizing her hat and cloak was soon arrayed for a walk.

"Where are you going?" asked Mrs. Reynolds, coming in.

"Over to town, to get me something to do," she replied.

"What did your aunt Mary say?"

Rosa told her all that passed.

"Oh, Rosa!" exclaimed her mother, "you ought never to have spoken in that manner to her!"

"What should I have said then, mama?" she demanded.

"Why didn't you tell her that you wouldn't receive any more letters; then if Mr. Metcalf wrote again, why simply conceal the fact from her."

"Why, mama!" cried the girl.

This course suggested by Mrs. Reynolds' craftiness by no means coincided with Rosa's open, ingenuous nature, but she held her tongue. This was her mother.

Walking as rapidly as possible, she soon reached Miss Limestone's establishment. That lady received her very graciously, and in a few moments the coveted situation was secured.

"The pay is very small—only five dollars a month," suggested Rosa, meekly.

"I am aware of that, Miss Rosa," said the lady, "but you see we cannot afford to give more to beginners. Many ladies are willing to work for nothing at first, in order to gain a foot-hold. You will begin by trimming hats; if you prove yourself competent and useful, of course you will not only command a larger salary after awhile, but gain a thorough knowledge of the business."

"Very good—I will accept your offer," said she. "When must I begin?"

"To-morrow," answered Miss Limestone.

Rosa raised her parasol and started down the street. She threaded her way among the passers-by, feeling much better and more comfortable. She determined to go by the post-office and get Metcalf's "daily report," as she called it. Standing before the opening in the office, while the boy sorted the letters, the time seemed interminably long. Her little heart beat so that she could hear it through her tight-fitting bodice, and blushed lest the small boy handling the letters should hear it too. When he placed a fat-looking

letter before her, she felt something bounding into her throat, as she glanced at the small boy to see if he was noticing her. Gathering her treasure as quickly as possible, she went on her way, keeping it hid from all view until she came to the silent path-way over the river, then she broke it open, reading while walking along. It must have been a pretty long one for she was not through with it until the forks of the road were reached—one of which led to her aunt's.

"I certainly am surprised to hear he is coming," she soliloquized to herself. "I believe he is only jesting; he says he is coming Saturday week; how I would like to see him! Strange—so strange, isn't it?" and her voice died away amidst her thoughts. She was as free from vanity as possible and wondered why Charlie Metcalf, with all his cleverness, could take such a fancy to her. Just then the voices of the children calling to her broke in upon her reverie.

CHAPTER XI.

Several weeks had passed since Rosa left for Etna and everything seemed to have gone wrong in the hitherto pleasant Sylvester mansion. Gordon and Julia studiously avoided each other, and Metcalf was as morose as a young hyena—so Frank informed him. Ma Sylvester was becoming impatient for the time for her summer trip, and pa Sylvester was miserable because ma was not happy.

Charlie Metcalf was now well satisfied that there was no happiness for him apart from Rosa Reynolds. He had written quite often to her about what was going on, and the

only real pleasure which he enjoyed since she left was the receipt of a sweet, newsy letter from her. He was sure now that if he saw her again he would tell her of his love if it resulted in eternal separation. Of course he would conceal nothing from her, but tell her all. He was not certain how she would look upon his situation, because people hold such a variety of opinions on subjects of this nature. If young girls generally have a horror of widowers how would they regard a man who once believed himself married and the woman still alive? Even in such a case there might be neither legal nor moral rights in her favor, yet in many ways she could be particularly nasty and disagreeable. For instance, by instituting a prosecution for bigamy, although she could never sustain it.

Charles Metcalf had never loved before in his life. He went through a marriage ceremony once, but he knew at the time that he did not care for the woman. He repented sincerely of that sin and took the heavy visitation afterwards falling upon him, meekly—never complaining. Up to this time his yoke was bearable, but since he loved Rosa Reynolds it became irksome and galling. How he wished now that he could recall that hasty, thoughtless step and present himself in person to her, as he was in heart—only her's, "yesterday, to-day and forever." But there was one thing he would certainly not do, and that was make the least effort to persuade her to see the matter through his glasses, but she should view it unbiased through her own.

Metcalf was a man of great emotional nature, with a will like a strong piece of wrought iron. When he first discovered his growing interest in this young lady, knowing his position, he brought this wonderful will power to bear upon it, and endeavored to crush it out. He failed ignominiously. The failure awed him. He now felt that a passion had taken possession of him stronger than he ever knew before. There was a sacred tenderness mingled with , too, because the object of it was the one and only woman

who had ever taught him "the sad, sad lesson of loving." It was also unselfish. He would have suffered any amount of trial and privation rather than cause her a moment's unhappiness, or disturb the peace of her mind for a second.

Sitting in the porch still thinking over the hardship of his position, the postman came up and handed him two letters. He took them carelessly, but the moment he read the address upon the one uppermost his heart seemed to stand still. He would never forget that handwriting, although three years had passed away since he saw it. It was that of the woman with whom he once went through a marriage ceremony. Breaking it open he read as follows:

BALTIMORE, June 29th, 1884.

DEAR MR. METCALF:

Pardon me for intruding upon you, but something has happened which makes it imperatively necessary for me to have an interview with you. Ere this reaches you I will be on my way to Shirly, where I learned by inquiry you are staying at present. Please call on me at Hotel Raymond on Tuesday afternoon, the 31st inst., at three o'clock.

Yours truly, MAMIE METCALF.

To say that he was astonished at the perusal of this would be putting it mildly; he was simply dumbfounded. For three years he had heard nothing from her, nor had any communication passed between them, excepting the allowance paid her through Metcalf's attorney. He had expressly forbade her seeking him out in any way, and she promised never to do so. What happened to cause her to do this he could not divine. He then thought he would wire her not to come, but to-day was the thirty-first, and the train by which she came was due in three hours. There was nothing left but to accord her the desired interview. He was extremely vexed. Recovering his self-possession as quickly as he could, he broke open the other letter. He saw it was from Major Ruskin.

STODDART, C. H., June 30th.

MY DEAR CHARLIE:

I received a letter from Doctor James Griswold in reference to you. I followed instructions in answering, and he will find but cold comfort in the reply. He was very abusive in his letter about you, using such terms as scamp, deceiver and the like. Don't kill the man; but I deem it best to acquaint you with what he is saying, in order that his tongue may be shut. All are well at Greystone Lodge. Let me know if I can be of any service to you.

Yours affect., JNO. W. RUSKIN.

From being extremely vexed, he became very angry—violently so. When the Bruisin' Lad lost his temper he was just as ugly and nasty as he was polite and amiable in his peaceful moments. He became very much excited, and rising from his seat went at once to look for Doctor Griswold. Reaching the front gate, he met Gordon.

"Where is Griswold's office?" he asked, moistening his lips quietly.

"What do you want with him, Metcalf?" he asked, in an alarmed voice, laying his hand on Charlie's arm.

"I want to speak with him a moment," he replied, a steely gleam shooting from his eyes in a way which caused one's blood to creep.

"Metcalf, you are angry—you have heard something—wait before you go," urged Gordon.

"Stand aside, Frank!" he cried out, hoarsely. "That man has been using abusive epithets about me, and I am going to stop him."

"Metcalf, you'll kill him if you go now, you are fearfully angry! Do wait and cool off. You don't know he said anything," urged Frank, catching hold of him.

"Let go!" and he shook Frank's arm off. "Yes, he did say it, because Ruskin wrote me. Move, Gordon! it is useless to stand here."

Finding it *was* useless to attempt any further restraint,

Frank allowed him to pass, and went with him as he moved quickly through the gate and down the sidewalk.

"Say, Charlie, you are not going to hurt him, are you?" he asked.

"I don't know what I shall do until I get there," he replied.

"Have you got any weapon?"

"No, I don't care for any unless some friend interferes."

"I'll see that nothing of that kind occurs," said Gordon.

The two men walked on in silence until they reached Doctor Griswold's office. Metcalf marched on in, and saw a wee-bit of a man writing at a table. As he glanced at him, a feeling of contempt pervaded him, so plainly did the Doctor's face show what stamp of man he was.

"You are Doctor James Griswold," he said, with a perceptible sneer, not unnoticed by the medical man.

"And, pray, how do you know me so well, considering I know nothing about you," he said, looking in a surprised manner at Charlie.

"Because you look like a liar!" he said, advancing a step nearer. "No, sit down until I am ready for you to get up," he went on, as Doctor Griswold rose in sheer astonishment. He placed both hands on his shoulders and crushed him down easily into the chair again.

"Who are you—what do you mean?" he asked, as he writhed in the vice-like grasp of The Bruisin' Lad.

"I am Charles Metcalf," he answered, with that peculiar steely gleam in his eyes, "and I want to know why you wrote that tissue of falsehoods to Major Ruskin."

"What—what do you allude to?" asked the doctor, his face turning deadly pale as the perspiration rolled from his brow down upon his cheeks. The man was thoroughly frightened now. He had heard so much about Metcalf's temper and desperation, that he really believed his time had come.

"Doctor Griswold, if you were a man physically, I should be sparing in words, and full-handed with something else," said Charlie, looking contemptuously down upon him. "But as you are such a contemptible piece of humanity, I shall only say a few words to you. You come of that stamp of men who like to blacken a fellow creature's name, destroy his reputation, not through necessity or duty, but mere malignacy. You have a heart full of malignant, bitter feelings, a heart void of all social duty, as well as the rights of your neighbor."

"Men who strike through revenge are actuated by some fancied or real injury committed against them; but, men of your class strike out of sheer malice—the most depraved state of degredation to which the human heart can sink. The only reason you are not a murderer is, you are an arrant coward. If I ever hear of your mentioning my name again, I shall inflict personal as well as bodily castigation upon you, and until then, I leave you to your own sweet reflections."

Charles Metcalf removed his hands from the doctor's shoulders and walked out. Gordon followed. On reaching the stairway the latter said:

"Metcalf, I am so glad you didn't hurt him!"

"He is a little puppy, nothing more," replied Charlie. "When I first heard of him I was under the impression that he was a man in size. Of course I would never strike one like him."

"Metcalf, you are a genuinely brave man," said Gordon. "Of course we all know you are very desperate when angry, but I feel now that you will never let your anger cause you to commit a mere act of violence."

"I should hope not," he answered earnestly.

The young gentlemen pursued their way to dinner. Metcalf had but little appetite; the shadows of the coming interview with Mamie Metcalf were already falling across his path and darkening it. He ransacked his brain

time and time again, endeavoring to seek the cause of her sudden visit, but all to no effect. He thought once of telling Gordon all about it; but the risk to Mamie caused him to keep his mouth sealed. He hardly knew what to do, and the only way out of the matter that he could see, was to grant the desired interview. If he failed to meet her at the hotel, she would seek him out, and that would be far more unpleasant.

On his return after dinner to his room, ma Sylvester met him at the front door. The moment he saw her he knew something was wrong. A lowering, sullen look rested upon her face, which Metcalf always hated to see there. Nothwithstanding her amusing attempts to play *la grande dame*, he had grown fond of her. She was genial, kind, and pleasant to all, and was undoubtedly very clever, naturally.

"Mr. Metcalf, where is Mr. Gordon?" she asked, with stately dignity.

"He left me a moment ago, after dinner. I suppose he went down town," he answered.

"As soon as he returns, if you see him, please say that I desire to speak with him for a short time."

"Yes, I will," he answered. "Can I do anything for you?"

"Nothing at all," she replied, moving towards her room majestically.

Metcalf watched her as she departed, and wondered what she wanted with Gordon. All at once it flashed across his mind.

"By jove!" he exclaimed, laughing, "she is going to score Gordon for addressing that lovely girl of hers. She won't get anything out of him, though."

Metcalf divined rightly. Ma Sylvester learned that morning about the parlor scene between Julia and Frank.

Julia went to take a music lesson, and during her absence a letter came for her from Rosa. Ma Sylvester

still adheres to the barbarous custom of opening her daughter's letters first and allowing her to peruse them afterwards. Acting under this maternal influence, she read Julia's letter, in which there was an unmistakable reference to Frank's courting escapade. She taxed Julia with it the moment the latter returned, and forced from her an account of the whole matter. She flew into one of her *grand* humors, declaring that things had come to a *grand* pass, in a *grand* way, and that she would put up with such *grand* doings no longer.

Entering her room after seeing Metcalf, she pitched into Julia again.

"I am going to give that Gordon a piece of my mind!" she exclaimed. "I never did like him. He ain't nothing no way. He ain't got money enough to bury himself with. Miss, you shall be present when I speak with him."

She had threatened the young girl with a prospect of this ordeal once before, and Julia begged to be excused.

"Mama, please don't say anything to him where I am. It is all over now. I will never speak to him again if you don't wish it. Don't say anything rough to him."

"Taking his part, are you?" she asked, with an inflexion of sarcasm in her tone.

"No, I am not," answered she. "But I did not treat him politely, and said some very foolish things to him. Mama, please let it all pass."

Julia here broke down and burst into tears. She loved her mother, and disliked exceedingly to see her annoyed. At the same time, she felt sure that Gordon was not to blame. She regretted extremely that there should be any rencontre between the two, and was violently opposed to hearing it.

"I shall not pass over it," said her mother. "I have treated that Gordon well. I gave up my best room to him, and he has been dealt with in the kindest manner. He is an ungrateful wretch."

"Maybe, mama, he didn't mean it as ingratitude when he said what he did to me," suggested Julia.

"Yes, he did!" she retorted. "I want you to understand that you shall tell me everything, even to your thoughts. You ought never to have kept this from me. Go, you shall! and hear every word I have to say to him."

"Whether I want to or not, mama?" she asked.

"Yes, whether you wish to or not," she replied. "If you don't obey my every wish and do just as I want you to, then you are a mean, black-hearted girl. That's all I have to say."

"Oh—oh—mama, you are so hard on me!" cried Julia, as fresh tears poured down her cheeks. "I hate to talk about such things to anyone. If Mr. Gordon had said anything he ought not, I would have told you about it."

"I don't believe you would," replied her mother. "I hear Mr. Gordon coming now. Get ready to go with me at once."

"Mama, dear mama!" cried Julia, throwing herself at her feet, "don't make me go! Spare me, spare my feelings! I feel as if I would sink under the ground now."

"Get up—you shall go," she cried. "I will punish you both properly. He should have spoken to me first and asked my consent. You ought to have told me. I intend to make you both pay for it, and drive him from the house."

Julia rose from her recumbent position slowly. In one moment she was transferred from the quiet, gentle, obedient girl into a woman, ready to do or die. Her mother's want of regard for those delicate, sweet, frail tendrils, which entwined this new sweetheart love first pained, then shocked, and finally hardened her. Following her mother quietly into the parlor, there was a set, determined expression upon her face, which boded no yielding from any position or stand she had taken. Immediately on entering, she caught Gordon's eye How gentle, easy and

dignified he appeared in contrast with her mother's uneasy, flurried and loud appearance.

"Mr. Gordon," said her ma, drawing herself up with great dignity, "I think you have acted in a most ungentlemanly manner towards me."

"In what way, Mrs. Sylvester?" he demanded, quietly.

Gordon was about the most difficult human being under the sun for any one to overthrow in a battle of words. He knew perfectly well why she sent for him, but was determined to make her acknowledge it in the onset.

"You ought to know without being told," she said.

"Not unless I am conscious of some wrong," he retorted.

"You have used my kindness and hospitality, sir, as a cloak under which to make improper advances towards my daughter—"

"One moment, ma'am," he interrupted: "kindly allow Miss Julia to retire during this discussion."

"My name is not ma'am," she uttered with rising color. "I—"

"Well then, madam," he interrupted, "I am sure you do not wish your daughter to be present at a time when it must be peculiarly disagreeable to her. She has already informed me that it is not a pleasant matter; I sincerely wish to save her all pain and annoyance possible. Am I not correct, Miss Julia," he asked, turning towards her and bowing, "in supposing that you prefer not to be present?"

Julia's cheeks fairly burned. Here was the man whom she had treated so rudely, whose advances she had thrown aside with indignity and utmost scorn, against whom she had made all manner of accusations, taking her part and attempting in every way to save her feelings: she felt heartily ashamed of herself and very proud of him. Moreover, she could not help feeling it was on her account alone that he was bearing all this, and through her that he would be banished. She determined to set herself right before

him at all events, to show him that she had neither part nor parcel in bringing about this state of things.

"My daughter's wishes coincide with my own in this matter, and whatever I say she will re-echo," said Mrs. Sylvester, speaking just as Julia was about to reply. "You had no right to take advantage of my admitting you into my family to make love to my daughter. It was very underhand and sneaking in you, as my daughter most properly informed you when you forgot—"

"Mama!"

Ma Sylvester started and Gordon turned quickly towards Julia. Both looked on in astonishment at the young girl, who had suddenly cried out and risen to her feet. Admiration seized possession of Gordon as he looked at her sparkling dark eyes, her flushed cheeks and parted lips, her heaving bosom and almost quivering frame. Julia was thoroughly aroused now; her mother's want of lady-like tact towards herself, her want of justice towards Gordon, had simply driven the girl to bay, and like all people placed at bay, she turned not only to defend herself, but to rend her tormentors as well. A swift expression of infinite contempt and disgust shot over her face as she glanced at her mother.

"Mrs. Sylvester," spoke up Gordon, in a manly but dignified tone, "truth compels me to say that I never made an improper proposal to your daughter; I love and desire to cherish her, as any true-hearted man would love and cherish a wife. I told her of it, I asked her to be my wife: I would ask her again if I thought it would avail anything."

"Who are you, to speak in this lofty and grand manner to me!" cried Mrs. Sylvester, losing all control of herself, "you are a monster! a deceitful, scheming adventurer! you come into my house utterly poverty-stricken, and dare to try and steal my daughter's affections—"

"Mama!" rang out Julia's full voice, "you strangely

forget yourself: Mr. Gordon has not been guilty of anything wrong; he is not a monster nor a deceitful man; he didn't try to undermine you, nor steal my love. He was straightforward and manly about it. I acted badly towards him; I was rude and unlady-like to him! He is too good for my love! Mama he is much better than you; he stands now a hundred times nobler and gentler than you do; he is every inch a man."

She paused a moment for breath: she had no control of herself now. Her mother looked on in speechless amazement, while tears of gratitude shone in Gordon's eyes.

"Yes, mama, you are acting badly now; so there!" she said, stamping her little slippered foot, "you have made me submit to the most awful degredation, and torn aside the female veil of delicacy and true refinement, against my wishes. It is down-right mean in you—so there! You have accused Mr. Gordon of all kinds of things he didn't do—so there! You have used the most unlady-like language towards him while he has behaved with all the gentleness of a lady, combined with true courage and manliness—showing himself far superior to you—so there! He can love and trust the girl of a month's acquaintance and endeavors to save her feelings; you attempt to expose and torture them—so there! I like him for his noble generosity—his manliness—and mama, at this time I hate you for being rude and mean to him—so there! Mr. Gordon," she went on, "will you forgive me for having acted so badly to you? I am ashamed of myself already: I am so much oblige to you for taking such careful thought about my feelings and wishes; I do believe you love me and I am proud of having won such love!"

"Brave girl—generous girl—noble girl!" cried Gordon, "you are worthy the love of a Prince. I am truly grateful to you for your honest effort in behalf of justice." And he gently took and raised her lovely little hand to his lips.

Ma Sylvester was not only dumbfounded for the moment, but silenced. She appeared dazed.

"Julia!" she exclaimed, hoarsely, the tears filling her eyes.

"Mama!" cried the girl, her soft heart relenting as she burst into tears. "I do love you. You have been so good and kind to me all my life. I almost wish I was never born. Mama, I am sorry I had to speak to you so. I love you dearly. You are as good and sweet as you can be, but so mean and unjust to Mr. Gordon." She threw her arms around her mother, kissed her brow and cheeks, and then releasing her, left the room, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Mr. Gordon," said ma Sylvester, "you are the cause of all this. I wish you had never come here. You have not only made me see a great deal of trouble, but caused my daughter to defy me."

"Mrs. Sylvester," he said, "I am sorry that I should have brought you annoyance, but I could not help loving your daughter. You will find that she will do her duty fully in everything, and will be just as opposed to thwarting you as ever."

"Everything goes against me in these days," she sighed, at she left the room.

Gordon stood alone for a moment, and then departed, to see if he could find Julia anywhere.

CHAPTER XII.

Just about the time that Julia was defending Frank Gordon so ably, Charlie Metcalf was standing in the rotunda of Hotel Raymond, waiting until the clerk became

disengaged in order to inquire if Mamie Metcalf was there.

"Did Mrs. Mamie Metcalf arrive here on the west bound train?" he asked of the clerk, when the latter turned towards him.

"Lady with commanding figure, dark hair and eyes?" he inquired in reply.

"Yes, sir," replied Metcalf.

"I think she is here—got a card?" he asked, tapping a bell at his hand for a servant. "Take this to number 16," he said, handing the card Charlie gave him to a chambermaid.

Metcalf glanced around the office for some minutes, until the waitress returned.

"Come this way," she said, turning and retracing her steps upstairs, followed by himself.

He felt his heart beating a trifle faster as he knocked upon the door.

"Come in," said a sweet, clear voice, sounding like music to the ears.

He went in and his eyes once more rested upon the lady who had nearly wrecked his life.

She was a beautiful woman some twenty-nine years old. Her eyes were very dark, large and lustrous, sparkling like two twin diamonds. Her wealth of black hair pushed back from a perfect brow, seemed all the time trying to escape from its confines. A Grecian nose and rosebud of a mouth completed a face of peculiar lovliness. She was rather tall, yet her figure was beautifully rounded, and like a piece of statuary in curves and lines, as she stood near the mantel, with one elbow resting upon it. She moved gracefully forward as Charlie entered, extending her right hand.

"I am very glad to see you, and feel deeply grateful that you have come," she said, as he seated himself.

"I don't know that I am entitled to any great amount of gratitude," he answered, coldly.

"I expect you are very much surprised to see me here, but I thought it best to see you. Charlie, my Pennsylvania husband is dead!"

Had any other lady announced to one husband living that another husband had just died, with her flippant tone, he would have been shocked; but, nothing that Mamie might say, nor her manner of expressing it, could ever shock him now.

"When did he die?" he asked.

"About three months ago," she answered. "I could not be prosecuted now Charlie for marrying you when he was living, could I?" she asked, playing with a tassel upon her wrapper.

"His death does not purge the bigamy," answered he. "But the statute of limitations in Pennsylvania bars the prosecution of the offense after five years. More than that time has elapsed since you married me, so you stand in no danger of ever being prosecuted."

"I am free now, am I?" she asked.

"Perfectly so," he said.

"Well now, here. You have been the noblest and truest man that God ever created towards me, and I will never forget you for it. I know I am utterly unworthy of you, but if you think it is our duty not to part, I will re-marry you to-day, and endeavor to do my full duty as your wife."

"That can never be," he said quietly. "In the first first place, we were not joined together as man and wife, because you had a lawful husband living, so it is rather our duty to part. Again, you make this proposition out of gratitude, which I could never feel at liberty to accept, even if there was no other impediment to prevent our being reunited. But there is an obstacle now which I could never overcome. I have learned to love another woman."

"Then you can marry her and be happy, can't you?" she asked. "Charlie, I know you think I am all levity and untrustworthy, because you have cause to think that of me: but as God is my witness, I long to see you happy. I know I deceived you cruelly, turned you from a wayward, happy boy into a soured, prematurely old man. I deserve punishment, and had I fallen into the clutches of ordinary men, I would probably be languishing now in the walls of some prison, undergoing my just deserts. You have kept silent at the expense of your reputation, for time and again persons have come to me and offered their sympathy, deploring the fact that I should have been married to and deserted by that awful 'Bruisin' Lad O' Greystone Lodge.' I hated myself for listening; I longed to cry out and tell them the truth, but I was too selfish. I say therefore, I would make any sacrifice for your happiness. Any woman could trust herself to you, because you would die before you would injure a hair of her head, Henceforth, I shall not accept a dollar of your hard earned money, but shall get my aunt to keep me until my circumstances are such as will enable me to take care of myself. When you first heard of my deception you would not listen to me; you would not hear a single extenuating circumstance. I could not blame you then; I do not now. But since you have softened towards me a little I want to tell you that I acted as I did because I loved you better than life itself. Who could help loving you if they once knew you? Every silent moment which you have endured on my account has been richly showered with the tenderest thoughts and feelings of my heart. I would have done anything; committed any sin to have gained you, because, Charlie Metcalf, from the first hour I ever saw you, you have been the idol of my girlhood, the lord of my womanhood. You know I am telling you the truth now. You have told me that you love the other woman. I know you will win her, and I also know how gently and kindly you will deal with

her and how happy she will be; but she will never love you as I, nor would she sacrifice what I did to live with you for a short time. Even with all my love for you, which will soon wither from want of care, I wish you every happiness, every joy in your new found treasure, and Charlie, if you cannot love me won't you at least pity me and say you forgive me?"

She bowed her head until it rested upon her arm lying on the table. Her frame quivered and then shook. She was sobbing.

Tears flowed freely down the cheeks of the Bruisin' Lad as he rose and walked to where she was sitting. He bent gently over her and placed his hand upon the waving, shining tresses.

"Mamie," he said, with a broken voice, "don't blame yourself. I am very glad you have been so candid, and as freely as I hope to be forgiven, I forgive you for any and all wrong you ever did. If necessary, I would have continued on in silence before a breath of suspicion should have rested on your name. It is all over now. You are young, clever and beautiful. Make your peace with Him in whom we live and move and have our being, and you will yet be happy. If I can ever do anything for you, and you will let me know, I will accomplish it if possible. And now it is best for us to part, so let me say good bye."

She raised her head slowly. Throwing her arms around him, she kissed his brow, cheeks and lips.

"Good bye, Charlie," she sobbed. "Go away at once and God bless you."

Metcalf moved slowly from the room. He glanced back at the bowed figure, and silently uttered a prayer for her happiness.

That evening at seven forty-five, a lady closely veiled left upon the east bound train. She was Mamie Metcalf, pursuing her way back to Baltimore with a sad heart and dark future path before her.

On reaching the Sylvester mansion Metcalf inquired for Frank, but found him out.

When Gordon went in search of Julia, he was sure she had gone to pa Sylvester. She generally went to him in her troubles with ma Sylvester. He was perfectly devoted to his girl, and spoiled her even more than his wife.

Gordon found out what particular building he was superintending with his force, and directed his footsteps there. It was almost on the outskirts of the town. He went into two or three bare rooms but found neither pa Sylvester nor Julia. Presently, looking down the hall he spied a white skirt in a room at the other end of the building. He walked in that direction as fast as his feet could carry him. When he entered the unfinished door she looked up, and a joyful light filled her eyes. Not one glance of that light escaped him. As he approached she rose, and her face became suffused with blushes. In another moment, regardless of pa Sylvester, he said :

" My darling, I have come for you."

" If I am worth having, take me," she replied softly, looking unutterable things out of her large dark eyes.

In one moment he had her in his arms. As she nestled against him she diminished in bulk until she scarcely looked half of her ordinary size. Whether it was the contrast by his manly figure or that she disappeared in some kind of miraculous way it is impossible to say.

" You dear, sweet, generous, brave little darling ! " he whispered, between the kisses.

" You mean, sneaking, underhand, handsome old Gordon ! " she returned, with the prettiest kind of a face.

Again he pressed her to him, and again she disappeared in that mysterious, peculiar kind of way.

" Oh lor ! " she exclaimed, " pa is here. Say something to him."

" Now in a minute, dear," he uttered softly, as he put her through that vanishing process a third time.

"Mr. Sylvester," said he, releasing Julia at last, "your daughter has consented to make me happy. Give us your consent?"

"It seems you two have fixed up the matter so completely that you scarcely need any assistance," he replied in a dazed way.

"But pa, dear pa," said the girl, placing her hand through his arm; "say it is all right, won't you? Pa, I always loved you so dearly, you were ever nice and kind to me, say you won't mind!"

I am sure as you have already settled it I ought not to interfere without a cause," he answered lovingly, as he lookeddown upon her.

"Mr. Sylvester, allow me to add my entreaties to hers," smiled Gordon. "I am sure I can satisfy you as to myself and family."

"I have no doubt about that, Mr. Gordon," replied pa Sylvester. "Well, let us go home now, Julia," and here pa Sylvester's face lengthened considerably, "I am somewhat doubtful as to how your ma will take this. Your ma is a fine woman, Julia, but she has peculiar notions at times."

"I am afraid Mrs. Sylvester will oppose our plans," said Frank. "She doesn't like me very much. She has already expressed an opinion very decidedly against my attentions to Julia."

"Who gave you permission to call me Julia?" she asked, looking archly at Gordon.

"Just took it so," he laughed.

"Pa, you do your best with ma," said Julia, siding up to him with one of her sweetest smiles. "Pa, you are a dear, sweet old pa, and if you will back us strong, ma will give in. Poor ma! She is just as good and nice as she can be, and I love her so much."

"I will do the best I can," he said, dubiously, "but you had best make up your mind to some opposition, my

dear. Your ma is a splendid woman, but she does not like to give in."

When they reached the front gate, pa went in first. The young people lingered a moment at the gate in the twilight. Gordon once more took her in his arms and she vanished so greatly from sight that her white dress skirts were alone discernible. He raised her dear, sweet, little face to his and kissed the rose-bud of a mouth.

"Julia!" called her ma.

"Oh goodness!" she cried, jerking herself from Gordon's arms. "I wonder what ma wants."

"I'll take your part this time, dear," he said, as they walked towards the piazza.

"Julia, Mr. Archer wants to see you," her mother said coldly.

"Where is he, ma?"

"He is in the parlor."

"I don't want to see him one bit. He is so hateful," she said, irritably.

"Go in and see him at all events," said ma Sylvester.

"Yes, go in and speak to him anyhow," urged Gordon.

Julia placed her handkerchief and hat upon the hall stand, and, with a parting smile, went into the parlor.

"Miss Julia, how are you; haven't seen you for a month of Sundays," he said, jerking himself up from his chair.

Julia heartily wished that it would be two months of Sundays before she saw him again.

"I am well," she answered, coldly.

"Nice weather we are having?"

"Yes."

"Need some rain."

"Yes."

Then there was a pause. Archer sat upon his right hand, and rubbed his leg with his left. He doubled up his right foot under his chair.

He came fully with the intention of declaring his love, and having it out with her, as he told a fellow comrade while he was covering a roof.

"Miss Julia, what about our trip to the Springs," he asked.

"Don't know."

"Are you going?"

"No."

"Won't you allow me to take you out?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because."

"Because what?"

"Nothing."

"Miss Julia, you look very sweet."

"Mr. Archer!"

"Well!"

"If you dare to use any such expressions as that to me, I will be under the necessity of leaving the room," she said, firing up.

"Don't kick so hard," he said "Miss Julia, the truth will out. I—I—love—"

It didn't out in this case though. Before he had scarcely gotten the word from his lips she was upon her feet, her eyes darting a look which fairly withered him. She was furious. Wasn't she Frank Gordon's property? Didn't she belong to him? If her love belonged to the stylish, genteel, clever, *insouciant* Frank Gordon, how dared this lout to name such a word to her. For a moment utterance failed her. At last she said:

"Mr. Archer, you will please never say such a thing to me again."

"But, Miss Julia, if I love—"

"Mr. Archer!" she interrupted.

"Love—"

"Stop this instant," she cried indignantly.

"If I love—"

"If you don't hush," she again interrupted, "I'll—I'll—"

"Do what?" he asked, after waiting for a completion of her sentence.

There was a pause as the color suffused her cheek.

"As I was saying, I can't help it if I do love—"

"I'll call Mr. Gordon if you don't hush, that's what I will do," she said, imperiously, stamping her foot.

"Gordon—what has he got to do with it?" he asked, in a dazed sort of way.

Suddenly his face brightened.

"I know what you mean now!" he cried, triumphantly. "You are going to get him to champion you, are you? I wish you would. How I would love to pommel his fine head! He never worked in his life. I would knock some of those city airs out of him. As I was proceeding to say, if I love—"

"Good night, Mr. Archer," she said, moving away. She looked back when at the door, and saw him standing in the middle of the room see-sawing the air with both fists, as if he was giving Gordon a sound drubbing.

CHAPTER XIII.

The time slipped quickly by, and the day came at last on which Metcalf purposed to visit Etna. He spoke but little of his proposed trip, and when he boarded the train that Saturday morning Gordon and Julia were the only persons who knew anything of his whereabouts.

About twelve o'clock he stepped from the cars at Etna. Rosa told him where she lived, so he set out at once to find her home, which was on the eastern suburbs of the city. Before going far he found that he had some pretty stiff hills to pull. At last he came to the forks of the road, and discovered that he had not the ghost of an idea which to take. Pausing and debating which was correct, a lady came up—a large, stout, fine looking individual. She stopped too.

"Can you tell me which road we take here to reach Mrs. Gooch's!" she asked. "I knew the way long time ago, but have forgotten it."

"I want to find the way myself," answered he, taking off his hat to the lady.

"I think we take the left," she said, moving down that branch of the road.

They walked up a steep ascent until they came to a house. There a man informed them that they had taken the wrong road. Retracing their steps, they soon got into the right way, and in fifteen minutes were going up the rocky lane near Mrs. Gooch's.

"What a fearful climb!" she exclaimed, stopping a moment and puffing and blowing.

The Bruisin' Lad did not think the ascent so awfully steep. He concluded it must be the lady's magnificent proportions which caused her such intense exertion. Nevertheless, gallantry demanded acquiescence on his part.

"It is extremely steep, and then it is so warm," he said, smiling pleasantly as she tried it again.

"Cousin Elmira Reynolds should take my visit as quite a compliment," she said, laughing, as they paused before a gate at the side of a house constructed of plain boards. Charlie stopped because she did, yet he looked wonderingly at her for so doing. She understood him.

"There is a bad dog here," she laughed.

"You don't say so!" he cried, in a mock alarmed voice. "I prefer leaving my card for him."

"I will hollow," she said. "Elmira!" she cried.

"Bow—wow—wow," barked a dog, rushing out from a back building, followed by two or three children.

"Sick'em, Shocko, sick'em!" they cried, as the dog rushed towards the gate.

One of the little boys became so much amused that he rolled over and over again in the grass, while Metcalf laughed heartily as the Fat Lady poked through the bars of the gate at the dog with her umbrella.

"Come back children, go in the house!" called out a lady, stepping from the door of the back house and throwing a sun bonnet over her head. She came to the gate in a few moments. Metcalf could see that she was very much flurried.

"Sallie, I am very glad to see you; come in. How are you, sir; walk in," she said, looking at Metcalf.

All proceeded in and were soon seated in a cozy sitting room.

"I hope you do not consider me an intruder," said Charlie. "I suppose you are Miss Rosa's mother. Metcalf is my name."

"I have heard my daughter speak of you, sir," she replied, stiffly.

Metcalf took a good look at her as she sat bolt-upright in her chair. One thing was clearly palpable. She was not expecting them, and their arrival disconcerted her. Her black dress was covered here and there with spots of flour, and her neck was in that collarless condition which all female necks cannot stand. Her boots were unbuttoned, and the leather fittings across the instep hung over on the sides. As much as the Bruisin' Lad was charmed with Rosa, candor compelled him to admit that her mother, like ma Sylvester, only in a different way, was a peculiar personage. He thought none the less of her on that account, because it is only that class of people who know better and

fail to do better, whom we blame for not being what they should.

"Sallie, why didn't you all let me know you were coming," she said.

Metcalf took the "all" to himself, as she looked at him when she said it.

"I wrote Miss Rosa I was coming—didn't she say something to you about it?" he asked.

"She did mention it, but I think she believed you were jesting," she replied.

"I will ask her what was in the letter to make her think that," he said, smiling.

"Mr. Metcalf," spoke up the Fat Lady, "you must not say anything about the letters."

"Why?" he asked, surprised that the Fat Lady should have made such a remark.

She looked at Mrs. Reynolds. Mrs. Reynolds looked at her. Telegraphic dispatches seemed to be conveyed between them by these glances.

"Because," went on the Fat Lady, "Rosa has an aunt who does not like for her to receive letters."

"Where is Miss Rosa?" asked Metcalf.

"She is at her usual place of employment," replied her mother.

"I tell you how to do, Elmira," went on the Fat Lady, who seemed to be full of resources. "Let Mr. Metcalf go over and get Rosa and bring her home.

"Rosa might not like that," suggested her mother.

"I'll take the chances, Mrs. Reynolds," said Metcalf. "Give me the number of the house where she is employed.

For a moment she demurred, but on being urged by the Fat Lady, at last consented. Taking it down on a piece of paper, he bade them good morning.

He was a little annoyed at Rosa's thinking he was jesting about coming. He wrote her very positively that he would be down, and could not recall any act of his which justi-

fied her in thinking that he would jest where she was concerned. Reaching the hotel, he called for paper and ink, and wrote her as follows:

"I am here. I went over to your house with your cousin Sallie, who is there now, but you were out. I understand you said I was not in earnest about coming down, but I fail to comprehend your reason for saying that. Now that I am here I would like to see you. May I have the pleasure of escorting you home this afternoon? I will call at the store any hour you may suggest, or if you prefer, will wait until you go home and see you there.

Yours, yesterday, to-day and forever,

CHAS. METAALF."

Metcalf had no idea how she would like the ending of the note, but as it was the truth he wrote it, and sealing it, sent it by the hotel porter.

Waiting for the reply, he wondered what she would would say. Somehow or other he felt that she would allow him to call and take her home, because she was not that stamp of girl to be ashamed of her employment. He knew he was not a little excited when the boy returned with the answer, because his fingers trembled as he tore open the envelope. Pushing his hat back on his head, he read:

"I am really mad because you didn't let me know certainly you were coming, but I am delighted to find that Sallie and you are here. I will allow you to escort me home with pleasure this evening. Excuse haste.

ROSA."

"P. S.—Don't call here until six o'clock, because *it* can't get off before then."

A smile rippled across the Bruisin' Lad's face as he read the postscript. Of course, in her haste she wrote "it" for "I." Clearly it was a mistake, because her dictation and expression were unusually happy in her letters. But the mistake was so funny, the "it can't get off" so cute, that his smile rippled broader and broader, until he was laughing softly to himself. He thought that she was the

most natural, ingenuous, unaffected and sweetest "it" he had ever known in his life.

He went out then to see something of the city, but during the whole time hung about that part where she was at work. He liked her all the more for not being ashamed to meet him at the place of her employment in her every day working costume. He went half a dozen times at least to the hotel to see what hour it was. Every lady's hat he saw was duly inspected, and he wondered if Rosa trimmed it. If she did, he longed to have been in the hat's place. But the longest time slips away after awhile. It was fifteen minutes to six the last time he went to the hotel, so he made preparations to go up and escort her home.

Nearing the store where she was at work, the Bruisin' Lad began to get excited. This middle aged man with nerves like steel, who never lost his presence of mind under any circumstances, walked past the door of the establishment twice before he could compose himself sufficiently to go in. Recognizing his own heart beats and quickened pulse, he was afraid every one in the store would know about them too. At last, composing his features, and controlling his heart the best he could, he walked in. The first person he saw was Rosa, standing between the counter and window in a kind of square space.

She came forward gracefully and easily, and by the most consummate tact, assisted greatly in relieving him of his embarrassment.

Metcalf could see she was glad to see him. Her sparkling eye, blushing cheek and overflowing smile told the tale, strive as she might to conceal it. He scarcely knew which showed the richest color, her cheeks or a lovely shade of pink ribbon she held in her hand.

Never in the walls of any palatial mansion, by the side of some fair belle, was he half so happy as standing in this little corner—he looked into the artless, smiling face of this ingenuous maiden.

For the time being it was like a dream: the little space appeared filled with love: the hats, ribbons and trimmings impregnated with love; every breath of air whispered love, sounding like the musical notes of an Æolian harp miles away, played on by vibrations of wind, sighing love, and she standing before him, with her natural, ingenuous manner, looked as if she was born for love.

To him she was the whole female sex, none others existed. Looking upon her, it seemed that he had loved her from eternity; that he was born for that purpose and she created to fill every void in his heart; that his love had never been awakened before, in order that its wealth, strength and purity might be given to her alone. He looked into her eyes with an intensity which seemed bent upon gauging every beat of her heart, while she shyly returned it with an innocent, guileless expression, knowing that he would only guage a heart worthy the noblest and highest love which man could bestow upon woman.

Presently he heard the musical tones of her voice, as if they were "over the hills and far away." Gradually their sound came nearer and nearer until he heard them right at his ears.

"Why didn't you bring Julia with you," she was saying.

"Gordon would have gone into convulsions," he said, "if she had come."

"You don't mean—"

"Yes, I do mean," he interrupted, with a significant glance.

"Well, I am surprised!" she exclaimed, pausing a moment in her occupation of placing a piece of ribbon in the show case. "No, I am not so surprised either. Things were looking in that direction when I left there."

"You are like the person who loses an old relation," he laughed. "You would not have been surprised at his death any particular time, but when he died you were shocked."

"That's it exactly," she said. "But isn't that rather contradictory?"

"I should say so," he replied.

"Mr. Metcalf, please excuse me, I didn't mean it, but I have been keeping you standing all this time," she said, with a contrite look.

"It doesn't matter, you have it to do," he answered.

"Oh, but I am different! It is my duty," she said. "See that stool over yonder at the end of the counter? Take that and sit down until I get these things put away, and then we will go."

"I don't want to," he pleaded.

"But you must," she ordered.

"Suppose I won't?" he asked.

"Then I'll make a face at you if you don't," she said, looking saucily at him.

"And if you do, I will kiss you if I have to run you in one of these bandboxes to catch you," he laughed.

"Mr. Metcalf, you are mean enough to do anything. Go now and take that stool, and mind, don't you get in anybody's way."

She pointed towards the seat in an imperious manner, and Metcalf, that Bruisin' Lad O' Greystone Lodge, who was never known to obey anyone in his life, who invariably had his own way, it mattered not the cost, walked obediently to the stool and took his seat. There he sat watching every one of her movements like some great mastiff would gaze at his fragile mistress, ready to bound up at her call, or place his head upon his paws when ordered by a simple motion of her hand, never once removing his eyes from her countenance. This powerful sensation you call love is the most mysterious thing in this world except—a woman.

After while Charlie saw her go in a back room, and in a moment return with her hat, gloves and sun umbrella.

"Come on now," she called.

In a second he was by her side.

"Let me take your umbrella," said he. "Look here! What did you mean by saying you didn't believe me?"

"I didn't say—I mean I didn't think you were coming," she said. "I thought you were only jesting."

"Well, you stop thinking on that subject," he growled.

"Now you are getting in one of your old teasing, mean fits again," she said, drawing on her gloves. "Come—let's go."

They wended their way down the street oblivious to all. How happy they were. The whole world was pleasant to them. The rough, ragged street, crowded with hot, dusty pedestrians, was a walk of pleasure; the bridge spanning the Cressida river a network of fairy visions; the water rolling beneath, but a mirror to reflect their happiness as they stood over it, one asking the other what each would do if either should fall in; the rugged road beyond, up the steep ascent a pathway of roses, along which they trod leisurely, stopping ever and anon to pluck a wild flower or look into each other's eyes and say those soft nothings so precious to themselves, so—foolish to a cold, callous, outside world.

When they reached the lane leading to her aunt's house, they paused a moment to get a glimpse of the setting sun.

"Miss Rosa, what do you generally do on Sunday," he asked.

"Sunday school, church; dinner, church; supper, church," she replied.

"You get pious on Sunday, then."

"Not so much a matter of piety as going around. It is the only day I have and I go out to see something of the world and its wife."

"Can I go the whole rounds with you to-morrow?" he asked.

"Everything?"

"Yes, everything, including dinner and supper."

"Why certainly, if mama is willing."

By this time they had reached the little gate leading into Mrs. Gooch's inclosure. They stood looking over the surrounding hills as their tops reflected the variegated colors made by the rays of the setting sun. The hills clothed with all their summer verdure, the building and glittering church spires standing forth like so many towers and battlements in some feudal age; the cloud-flecked, red horizon stretching away to the hills beyond, illuminated by a glaring ball of fire sinking gradually into unfathomable depths: the lovely face of the dark-eyed maiden radiated by the invisible zone of love, all caused the Bruisin' Lad to feel as if he was in some enchanted paradise of pleasure.

Both were equally impressed with the scene, and neither spoke for a moment. There is a time like this in the lives of many, when the heart is so filled with unspeakable pleasure that the mouth dare not give forth an utterance for fear the enchantment may be dispelled.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" he asked, in a voice re-echoing the impression upon his heart rather than seeking any answer to the question.

"Lovely," she returned, in the same absent way.

Presently he turned his face towards hers. Their eyes met for one moment. Her's drooped with a quivering expression; his turned again towards the west. In that look the Bruisin' Lad and Rosa Reynolds knew that they loved each other with that higher and purer love which never passeth away.

Neither uttered a word. A figure of speech at that moment to express what either felt would have been sacrilegious. Each knew it and was silent. Both intuitively recognized that the strength and character of the love they possessed was as lasting and impregnable as the old, old hills they gazed upon, and that the one could be swept away as easily as the other.

Silently, almost sacredly he placed her umbrella against the fence. He turned and retraced his steps towards the

city. As his figure receded into the darkening shadows of twilight—silently she walked into the house.

When Metcalf reached his hotel he found his cousin and another gentleman waiting to receive him.

"Where have you been?" asked Malcolm Greame. "We have been waiting here for an hour."

"When did you reach town?" inquired Metcalf of his cousin, Greame.

"I arrived this evening. I saw your name upon the hotel register. We want you to make up a game of three-ball billiards; I told the fellows you were a crack player, so you must sustain the reputation gone ahead.

Metcalf reflected a moment. Billiards meant champagne, and in all probability a night's carousal. He now felt a distaste for such things. A better, purer, and higher impulse was fast growing in him since he learned to love this girl. His thoughts soared after something which would make him grander and nobler in all things. He made up his mind to take no part in the game.

"Greame, I don't feel equal to playing," he said, kindly yet firmly.

"Why, what's up?"

"Nothing."

Greame looked at him in astonishment, and turning upon his heel, left with the rest.

Do not think that Charles Metcalf was an abstemious man about these things. To the contrary, at one time he was just the reverse. No person had been fonder of pleasure in every way than he. A selfish gratification of every want was what caused his talents to lie hidden. But now, for her sake, he wanted to soar aloft; to make himself in every way worthy of her.

Sitting by the window in his room, he thought a great deal about her. In every imaginable way her face came before his mental vision, conjuring up the noblest desires in the man's whole nature: thus drawing in conflict old estab-

lished, selfish habits, with new-born, better and higher impulses:

Some thought would rise and come to view
Whispering, "now, this course pursue."
A gentler one then took its place,
And held aloft her conq'ring face.

Some old time wish would want its sway,
And long to go the old time way,
But, like the moon chased by the sun,
The new thought comes, the old is done.

With gratitude and heartfelt praise,
He sees recede those old time ways,
Encircling 'round this new born thought,
Shine the gems thus newly wrought.

'Midst those gems with purest light,
Like some central jewel bright,
Shines her face so free from guile,
Beck'ning with its winsome smile.

Beck'ning how? Ah, with that grace,
Which purest hearts ere lend the face!
Beck'ning from the old time days,
Beck'ning now to higher ways.

The moon mounted higher and higher. The stars changed their position. Everything became quiet, and not a murmur broke the absolute stillness of the night.

Metcalf thought and thought. At last he rose to retire. He was calmer and more peaceful now: the man had fought the battle. The love of the frail little woman, resting doubtless now in slumber, conquered. Charles Metcalf, before retiring, did something he had not done for years—he knelt in prayer.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sunday was ushered in clear, bright and beautiful. The Bruisin' Lad was over at Mrs. Gooch's betimes to get Mrs. Reynold's consent to go the rounds with Rosa. There

was no trouble on that score; so about nine o'clock Metcalf and Rosa set off, as lively and cheerful as a pair of crickets.

They had a thoroughly enjoyable day in every way. The reserve hitherto existing had been blown away by yesterday evening's revelation to them, and he fell into the position of ackowleged suitor, which she tacitly accepted. Little quarrels about how the umbrella should be carried: disputes about the various wild flowers along the way were all indulged in, with arm pressing against arm, and the utmost freedom. Acts of proprietorship began to crop up.

"Mr. Metcalf, put your hat back over your head," she said imperiously.

"Why so?"

"Because you look so much better with it pushed back than hanging low over your brow."

The hat was properly adjusted and the change approved, after a critical examination. When they reached the church Metcalf said that he was going down to the hotel while she attended her class in the Sunday school, and would return to take her to church.

"No, you go with me to Sunday school," she said imperatively.

So he went in without a murmur, and watched the whole proceedings until the class was dismissed.

Metcalf smiled to himself as he thought how this untutored little woman ordered him around, and what a pleasure it was to obey her slighest wish. He wondered what John Gordon and other old friends would say if they could see him quietly sitting through a Sunday school proceedings, because ordered to do so by a seventeen-year-old miss. At least, they would smile at the transformation.

After Sunday school he expressed a desire to go and hear Doctor Warburton preach. She quickly consented, and left her own church. When there, they made a

remarkably handsome pair, as they stood using the same hymnal, and sat shoulder to shoulder.

During one of the prayers he was first struck since he had known her with her beauty. Leaning the right side of her face on the end of the book, the front was turned towards him, with the long sweeping lashes, Grecian nose and ruby mouth, rounded chin and perfect neck. There was a little pout on her mouth, produced by the pressure of one side of her face on the book, that was simply ravishing. How he longed to touch it with his own. Kneeling at the second prayer, her face was in a different position. He bent over and whispered to her:

"Put the side of your face on the book again."

Slowly and easily the face was turned until it occupied the same position again, and the Bruisin' Lad was allowed to feast his eyes to his heart's content.

In the afternoon and at night he was with her again, and one thing taught him how enraptured he was. Although by her side all day, he never experienced the least *ennui;* was charmed and amused all the time, and constantly found something about her different from what he saw in other ladies.

That night, just before leaving to go back to the city, the Fat Lady asked him to inform her when he would return to Shirly. He told her the following afternoon. She announced her intention of going at the same time. It was then arranged that Mrs. Reynolds should take the Fat Lady to the station and the Bruisin' Lad go by for Rosa at Miss Linstone's just before the train left, so that both Mrs. Reynolds and Rosa could see them off. The Bruisin' Lad noticed during the evening a decided coolness towards himself on the part of the Fat Lady and Mrs. Reynolds.

During the day, while Rosa and Charlie were happily treading the pathway of love, the Fat Lady's mind was ruminating about Metcalf. She felt more and more certain that she had heard something about him. First, she recalled

the fact that he used to drive by Lancing Court House in a dashing, wild way, and the inhabitants called him something. Then it dawned upon her that he was the Metcalf who had spent the large estate; and finally her memory, in a cloudy way, brought home the fact that he was the gentleman who married the lovely lady from Pennsylvania. Her hands went up in holy horror at the thought of her female relatives receiving a gentleman who was married, and she instantly sought out Mrs. Reynolds and imparted this information to her. They held a council of war against Metcalf, reaching the conclusion that all intercourse must cease, until full inquiries could be made. The Fat Lady would go at once to Shirly, and consult ma Sylvester, the oracle in the family.

That evening, subsequent to the Bruisin' Lad's departure and while Rosa was retiring, her mother came into her room.

"Rosa, I wish to speak with you a moment."

"What about, mama?"

"Mr. Metcalf," she answered. "Rosa, have you ever written to him?"

"Yes—one letter and a note," she answered.

"Get them back at once," she said. "Rosa, be very careful what you say and do concerning him."

"Why, mama?" she asked, evident surprise depicted upon her countenance.

"Because I tell you to. I will give you my reason afterwards."

"Very good, mama," she said as she proceeded to disrobe.

Mrs. Reynolds instantly reported the subject of this conversation to the Fat Lady. "And," she said, "when Rosa asks for a return of her letters, he will see that she does not like him, and will go away never to come back again."

"Of course," assented the Fat Lady.

It did not seem to occur to either one of the ladies that Rosa could demand the return of those letters in a manner that would scarcely cause a ripple upon the intercourse between herself and the Bruisin' Lad. She was only seventeen years old, and she would, of course, obey her mother; not a single time, though, did it occur to her to wound Metcalf's feelings by so doing.

The following day, while they were going to the station, Rosa approached the subject.

"I want you to promise me to do something," she said.

"Yes, what is it?"

"Give me back the letter and note I wrote you."

"You are the quintessence of meanness," he said, laughing. "Make me promise to do the last thing I would care about performing."

"You won't care," she said, saucily.

"Not a bit," he said, ironically. "But what are your reasons?"

"I have a good reason," she said, earnestly, "which I will tell you the next time I see you."

"Will you promise me one thing?" he asked in return.

"Why certainly," she replied. "What is it?"

"Answer me three questions truthfully," he said.

"What are they?"

"Have I done or said anything to cause you to make this request?"

"That you haven't."

"Is it because you do not wish any correspondence between us?"

"No indeed," she said. "Your letters give me a great deal of pleasure."

"Do your reasons extend so far that you think my letters should cease?"

"I am sure they do not—whenever they do I will let you know."

"Under these circumstances your letters shall come back to you at once."

"Thank you," she said, simply.

Metcalf never thought once of pressing her for a reason why she wanted them returned. He knew some extrinsic power had been brought to bear, and that she would tell him at the proper time. She used the same *naive* simplicity in doing this that she exhibited in every one of her acts.

"I don't mean to be vain," he said, "but what will you do after I am gone?"

"I am going straight to the postoffice and get your letter you wrote and read it. I know the one sent on Friday is there, because I have not received it yet."

"I hope you will be amused by it," he said, laughing.

"I like your letters. They tell so much news and are so jolly," she said.

"I like to give you pleasure and amusement. I can never repay you for what you have done for me," he said, earnestly.

"What is that?"

"You are influencing me towards a higher and better life than I ever led before."

"You wrote me that, Mr. Metcalf, but isn't it more than I am entitled to?"

"No, I do not think so," he said, as they reached the station.

The Fat Lady and Mrs. Reynolds were cooler than ever to Charlie. They scarcely said a word to him as they sat on the benches in the reception room waiting for the train. When it thundered up Metcalf found a seat for the Fat Lady and then stood on the steps of the car talking to Rosa. Finally he stepped down upon the platform in order to say something he did not wish the others to hear.

"Rosa, let's go," said her mother.

"Yes," said the Fat Lady, "you had better start. The train will leave directly."

In an instant Charlie Metcalf became That Bruisin' Lad O' Greystone Lodge in feelings when these ladies deliberately manœuvred to break in upon a simple pleasure which could not have possibly harmed anyone. Whenever he took an opposite stand against a person, he was never satisfied with holding his position simply, but he became very aggressive, and was so nasty and disagreeable that one moved as far as possible from him. He made up his mind to say what he wanted, and determined now to take her off.

"I have something to say to you alone," he exclaimed, with that steely gleam coming in his eyes.

Any refusal on Rosa's part or objections by Mrs. Reynolds or the Fat Lady would have brought the question from the Bruisin' Lad's lips at once:

"What are your reasons for objecting?"

Mrs. Reynolds saw it; the Fat Lady felt it, and Rosa knew it. The latter moved aside with him as he handed her the umbrella which he was carrying for her and had forgotten to give her.

"What do you wish to say?" she asked, looking softly towards him.

"I wanted to say that if you think I had better not write to you I will not do so. I have so much confidence in you that nothing you could ever do would make me think less of you, because I love you more than any woman—"

"Don't speak quite so loud," she interrupted, raising her finger until she almost touched his lip.

"Love you more than any woman I ever met," he finished.

"You talk so loud," she said, as wave after wave of color passed over her cheeks, and her eyes looked softly into his.

Having said his say, the Bruisin' Lad took his position again upon the steps of the train.

"Come on Rosa, it is time we were going," said Mrs. Reynolds.

"Yes, we can't talk any more," assented the Fat Lady.

"Don't go until the train leaves, Miss Rosa," urged Metcalf. "Don't go back to that hot, stuffy store until you are obliged. Miss Limestone said you could stay until after the train left."

"Oh Mama, wait until Sallie goes before we leave," she said.

Mrs. Reynolds looked many things at Metcalf, in which the Fat Lady heartily joined. He looked over Mrs. Reynolds at Rosa all the time. As the train pulled out from the station the last face he got a glimpse of was Rosa's. That was just as he wanted it.

"She'll do," he muttered, taking a seat and replacing his hat with a traveling cap.

Those words uttered by many persons might have been almost meaningless; said by the Bruisin' Lad they meant that if he did not see her for ten years he would have implicit faith in her. He was satisfied that in every position she took, duty would be the governing motive, and that was just the line of conduct he would have her adopt.

Pursuing his way to Shirly, he had ample time for thought. He understood the machinations of the Fat Lady and Mrs. Reynolds just as well as if he had been told. Further, he keew before sundown this evening that ma Silvester and the Fat Lady would be scheming together to break up all intercourse between Rosa and himself. He was satisfied that in a measure they would accomplish it. In that case he would have to wait—that's all, because he no more doubted Rosa's abiding faith than he distrusted holy writ. He would watch events; believe in Rosa before everything; pursue his occupation with all his vim, and look to no other goal than a marriage with her finally.

The Bruisin' Lad was a consummate judge of human nature. This knowledge resulted from the application of

his quick, grasping mind to the various kinds of natures he came in contact with during his extended travels. He had reasons, too, for trusting that knowledge. He scarcely remembered a single instance in which his quick perceptions had failed him. Intuitively he knew ma Sylvester could not be trusted along any line which diverged from the natural course of her desires. Whilst generous to a fault in some things, she was selfish in others. For one reason alone he felt sure she would use every means in her power to cut him off from all intercourse with Rosa, and that was —she regarded the Bruisin' Lad as one of her leading ring horses, on account of his admiration for her.

Ma Sylvester was devoted to admiration. She desired the attention of every man who came in her way, and would flirt nineteen to the dozen. She liked to be told that she was handsome; that she was clever: that she was beautiful and fascinating, and she had no use for any one who did not think her different from the rest of her sex in everything. The Bruisin' Lad, knowing she was married and seeing much in her to admire, had on several occasions expressed this admiration. She, therefore, in many little ways had shown that she regarded Metcalf as her especial appropriation, and had been very restive more than once because he did not bow down sufficiently to please her. She boasted often of the fact that she managed her coterie of admirers just as an equestrian scientist governed his trick horses in a ring. When the Bruisin' Lad found that she regarded him in even the light of a possible admirer, he had nothing further to say than ordinary civility demanded.

When he reached Shirly he had not been in the house two hours before he heard some one approach the parlor door, in which room he was sitting.

"Excuse me, Mr. Metcalf, for intruding upon you, but I understand you have just returned from Etna, and I wanted to see you just a moment" spoke Mrs. Sylvester.

"Certainly; take a seat, won't you?"

"No, I will stand," she said, closing the door behind her. "Mr. Metcalf, do you think you have treated me right?"

"What do you mean, Mrs. Sylvester?" he inquired.

"Didn't you write to Rosa every day, and didn't you go down to see her Saturday?"

Metcalf was astounded to be thus taken to task by her. At first he could not divine what she meant. At all events he determined to be guarded.

"I have not informed any one what I have been doing."

"Didn't you write letters to Rosa?"

"I wrote some," he answered.

"Yes, and one of them was twenty pages. I can even tell you what you said in it. Ah! I know all about what you have been doing."

"Then you must have read it before I sent it," he retorted.

The Bruisin' Lad knew she had read none of his letters, knew that she would not stoop to such a trick. But the accusation did the work he intended.

"I take that as an insult!" she exclaimed "The idea of my reading any one's letters! I would scorn to do such a thing!"

"Well, as Miss Rosa would be incapable of showing a gentleman's letters, you must have seen this one ere it left here," he said, sending the shaft home this time. He knew before many moments self-exculpation would give him the information he wanted.

"Yes, and Miss Rosa is the very one who told about it," she said.

"I don't believe it."

"Then how could it be known?"

"I don't know and care less."

"Do you mean to say that you are not in love with Rosa?"

"I have not told any one that I cared for her."

"You know you love her!" she said angrily. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for telling Rosa that you love her, at the same time talking as you did to others."

"How did I talk to others?"

"You told them that you liked them; that they were handsome and clever."

"I say the same now," he said, smiling in spite of himself.

"I know what you have been doing; how many letters you have written," she said. "I know also about her asking you to return the letter she wrote you. See! I am posted. And I want to say this: I am going to watch the matter, and if I find you have been false to any one, I will make you pay for it!"

That was a threat which surprised the Bruisin' Lad on less than it angered him. He made up his mind to check any such language for the future.

"You are a married lady, Mrs. Sylvester," he said slowly, as if measuring every word before uttering it. "If I were to make love to every woman in the universe it could not concern you, unless, relying upon promises of mine, you had made up your mind to leave your husband's roof and care. Do you recollect my having entered into such an agreement?"

For a moment she was dumbfounded—utterly amazed—so much so that her tongue refused to speak. The Bruisin' Lad had a remarkably plain way of putting things, and a disagreeable, grating manner of getting rid of them. Finally she recovered her self-possession enough to speak.

"Mr. Metcalf, have you lost your mind? What do you mean by speaking so to me? Surely you do not know me! Do I recollect any such agreement! Why, such an

idea, one way or the other, never entered my head!" she exclaimed, looking downright horror-stricken.

"Nor did it ever enter mine to be dangling around you, saying soft nothings and paying that kind of court which you see so many fools giving to married ladies of this day," he said emphatically. "If in the zenith of your wonderful imaginary powers such an idea ever entered your brain, I simply wish to disabuse you of it. The mode I referred to a moment ago is the only way by which an unmarried man could be false to a married lady. Since you disclaim the existence of such a state of things between us, I am at a loss to discern how I have been, or ever could be false to you—except in your imagination. By your accusation made, I should presume that you deem every man false who fails to pay you just such attentions as you desire, to say nothing of his wishes on the subject."

"I thank you, Mr. Metcalf!" she cried, drawing herself up in a dignified manner. "I do not wish the attentions of anyone who does not give them freely of his own accord. Nevertheless, you will see that I shall find out every line you write; everything you do."

"Probably you may. If Miss Reynolds, as a dutiful daughter, conceals nothing from her mother, certainly she is not to blame for her parent's indecent exposure of things," he said.

"Elmira didn't tell me anything," she said.

"But you derived the information from your cousin Sallie, the Fat Lady. She got hers from Mrs. Reynolds. She has just come from there and you have seen her since."

"I am not going to tell you who wrote or told me," she said. "But you need not blame Elmira, because she hasn't done anything. If Rosa wanted her letters back, it was not through her mother's seeking, but her own. It may be surprising to you, but Elmira doesn't wish her to correspond with anyone, because she informed me that Rosa was engaged to a gentleman in Washington. She is

going to be married to that man, and if I were in your place I would not bother myself about a lady who cared nothing for me, and was going to unite her fortunes with those of another. You will never marry her in this world."

With that parting shot she left the room. She really believed that the matter had been so delicately managed by Mrs. Reynolds that the application made by Rosa for her letters, was ample foundation on which to ground the assertion that she cared nothing for Metcalf. So well did she think the thing had been conducted that she really thought Charlie must see the matter in the same light.

But Charlie, already acquainted with the true standing of matters, looked through neither Mrs. Reynold's, the Fat Lady's nor ma Sylvester's glasses. He viewed the whole thing through those given him by Rosa when she asked for her letters, and took her words as she uttered them, her acts in the panorama as she went through each one, with her ingenuous, true manner, and not as the others would have him look upon them. To apply a trite, but homely saying to the subject, Rosa hedged beautifully on the whole crowd by her candor to Metcalf. She dutifully followed her mother's instructions, yet in such a manner as not to convey a false impression on the Bruisin' Lad.

CHAPTER XV.

About a week after the discussion between ma Sylvester and the Bruisin' Lad, Mrs. Reynolds accosted her daughter one morning just before she started to the place of her usual avocation for the day.

"Rosa, you must never speak to that Mr. Metcalf again. Did he return your letter?"

"Yes—both."

"Is he writing to you now?"

"Yes, mama; he writes as usual."

"Then write him to-day not to send any more of his letters. Tell him that you don't wish to receive them."

"Mama, why should I do this?"

"Because I tell you to," replied her mother in a commanding tone.

"You told me to get my letters back, mama, and I did so. You said you would give me a reason. You have not done so yet, and now you want me to stop his letters. Mama, I enjoy them very much, indeed, and I fancy he likes to write them. Tell me now, why he should not continue to write them?"

"My dear, that man is a scoundrel—a deceitful villain. He is married and has a wife living.

"Mr. Metcalf has a wife living!" exclaimed she, every particle of color receding from her cheeks. "Mama! you have lost your mind! Charlie Metcalf might have been married once, but he is single. Of course he is, mama! because he lives all alone."

"I tell you, he is married. His wife is in Baltimore now. I know what I am talking about. Everybody says he is married, and to prove it, I have a letter here from your aunt Sylvester, who says a friend of his told her. Moreover, he has been talking about you—"

"Talking about me!" she interrupted. "I don't believe it. What did he say?"

"He said he didn't care anything about you—that he never loved you."

"Did aunt Sylvester write you that?" she asked slowly.

"Yes; here is the letter."

"I don't want to see it—stay, yes, I will read it," she said, reaching out her hand for it.

Her mother handed her the letter, which she opened and read as follows:

"SHIRLY, July 15th, 1884.

MY DEAR ELMIRA:

I think I ought to write you about a certain gentleman rooming at my house who has been writing to and visiting Rosa. He is a married man and is a very peculiar person. I will call him Smith, and when you write you call him the same. We must be very careful what we say say and write, and not let any one know what we are doing. He says that he is willing for anybody to see the letters he wrote Rosa, and that he cares no more for her than the dirt under my buggy wheel. You cannot rely upon him. You had better be careful that Rosa neither writes to him nor receives his visits. Write soon.

Your affectionate sister,

JENNIE SYLVESTER."

This was from the oracle—the leader par excellence of this family. But even in that composition, the untutored girl with her sharp feminine instinct, traced feelings so strong that the truth in a measure was covered, even to her mind. The part alluding to statements made by him did not affect her at all, but the saying that he was married cut her to the quick. She handed it back to her mother without a word.

"What have you to say now?" asked her mother jeeringly.

"Nothing, mama; except I believe there is some explanation about his being married. I no more believe he has a living wife who has any claims upon him than that I am married. There is such a thing as a divorce, you know."

"You would marry a divorced man, would you?"

"Mr. Metcalf has never asked me."

"At any rate you write him as soon as you reach town that you want no more of his documents."

"Yes, mama, I will," answered the girl, turning wearily away and putting on her gloves.

In a few moments she was tracing her way towards the city. She had taken the Bruisin' Lad's part, nevertheless, she suffered intensely. Once or twice she almost staggered walking down the little lane. From her babyhood to this moment she never knew such emotional suffering. She realized slowly but surely how closely the Bruisin' Lad had entwined himself around the tendrils of her heart; how inexpressibly dear he had become to her; how her love for him permeated every fibre of her heart, and was the governing power of her existence, which all the rest of her nature bowed down to and worshipped. Dull, hopeless despair seemed to sieze her soul as the words of the Poet Laureate rang in her ears:

"Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now."

Mechanically she pursued her way, thinking and thinking, until her brain seemed to be on fire. She came presently to the bridge and her heart swelled as she remembered how bright and happy they were, crossing there a short time back. As the city came in full view she longed to flee and be alone. She shrank from human gaze. Her suffering was so acute she thought anyone could read it. Reaching the railroad crossing, the early east bound passenger train passed, preventing her from walking over the track for some moments. Watching it pass, the rumbling of the coaches caused her pain; each revolution of the wheels seemed to be crushing out all life and happiness, and mangling—ruthlessly tearing her heart into pieces. She stood it the best she could, nonetheless she bled sorely.

But youth combined with the pleasures of hope, react. She commenced to think about the matter as her love directed. The open, brown eyes of the Bruisin' Lad; his clear-cut features; his gentlemanly bearing and dignified demeanor negatived the idea that he would be guilty of so dishonorable an act as to seek the affections of any lady

when he was married and living with a wife. Why didn't he ever mention it? Why didn't somebody in Shirly know something about it? Why didn't he visit her or why wasn't she sometimes with him?

Then his looks, his soft, gentle manners, his earnest tones and consistent acts, all pleaded in his behalf. Just before reaching the store she said firmly to herself:

"I don't believe he has any wife, legally or morally, nor will I ever believe it unless he tells me so himself. He may have been married, but for his present state there is some explanation."

This kind of faith comes but from two sources: rectitude of principle on the part of the believer: the highest type of human love for the person believed in.

Reaching the store she sought for writing materials. She would follow the commands of her mother about stopping the letters.

Oh, how disagreeable it was! Only a few days ago she had walked out of this very room with the handsome, elegant Metcalf, amid the glances of her associates. How *distingue* he always looked? How neatly and tastefully he dressed? He talked differently from anyone else—had that quiet, easy, elegant, genteel manner which always bespeaks birth. The young ladies remarked upon it; she had often noticed it. Maybe even now those very girls wondered why she should have received a married gentleman. What would she say if they asked her about the matter?

Through all she believed in the man and was true.

She took up her pen. Could she write him that he must stop writing because she didn't want to receive them? Could she write him that she was tired of his letters and he must cease sending them? No, she could say none of these things. She would simply write the truth. Taking up a piece of paper, she wrote:

"ETNA, N. C., July 17th, 1884.

Please don't write any more letters for I cannot receive them. ROSA."

That was true, and she felt that the Bruisin' Lad would understand that she could not receive them. There was no contradiction in this assertion to that made to him when she saw him that she was glad to get his letters and enjoyed them. She sent this to the office and determined patiently to wait the development of results.

While Rosa was writing her letter, Mrs. Reynolds was indicting one, too. Hers was to ma Sylvester. The contents were to this effect:

"ETNA, N. C., July 17th, 1884.

MY DEAR JENNIE:

I did not receive your letter until last evening. I never had any use for that fellow Smith. What does he mean? He is a deceitful wretch—a monster, to talk as he did to you. I have part of the letters he wrote yet. I made a fire with some of them. When I come up I will let you see them. He is a designing wretch. Rosa cares nothing for him, not even enough to bring the flowers he sends her, home. She only wrote him a letter asking him to stop writing to her. We half way expect him down here, but if he comes she will not receive him. You are right; we must not let anyone know anything about what we are doing, but be as quiet as possible. I don't care much if you tell that fellow what I think about him. I hope to see you soon.

Your affect. sister,

ELMIRA REYNOLDS."

This letter she sent to the office by Joe. Assuming ma Sylvester's letter as a composition of truth, Mrs. Reynolds could scarcely be blamed for the tenor of hers. She firmly believed her daughter was being sought after by an unprincipled villain, and that it was her duty to protect her from him in every way she could. But it never once occurred to her to do Metcalf the simple justice of demanding an explanation from him as to all these things she heard.

None of the Bruisin' Lad's friends had ever known him to refuse to explain anything which could be reason-

ably required of him. While she was pondering over this matter Joe came in from the office with a letter for her.

"Where did you get it, Joe?" she asked, wondering who sent it.

"From the postoffice; where else do you reckon, mama?"

"Who wrote it, do you suppose, Joe?" she asked again, turning it over and over again.

"How can I tell, mama, as I have neither opened nor read it," said the little girl.

"Well, I'll read it—go out and play, Joe," she said, breaking open the letter.

"Yes, mama," said Joe. "If you have any difficulty in reading or understanding it, call me and I will spell it out for you."

Already she was reading it.

"SHIRLY, July 16th, 1884.

MRS. ELMIRA REYNOLDS:

My Dear Madam:

I write to know if you will be so kind as to accord me an interview on next Sunday. I have something in connection with myself which I desire you to know, and which I do not choose to leave unsaid any longer. A reply will greatly oblige Yours very truly,

CHARLES METCALF."

She was very much surprised at this epistle, and wondered what he wanted to say to her. She was sure he had some sinister or ulterior motive in view. Moreover, if he came there again, peoples' tongues would wag, and that would be the worst thing which could happen for Rosa. On the whole she preferred to have nothing to do with him. She would write and tell him so. She got out her writing materials and wrote this letter:

"ETNA, July 17th, 1884.

MR. METCALF:

Yours asking for interview has just been received. It will not be agreeable to give you the desired interview. Do not write to my daughter anymore. I object to it.

Respectfully, ELMIRA REYNOLDS."

She sealed and sent this letter. When she did that she placed in the hands of the Bruisin' Lad the very artillery he wished to use against ma Sylvester. She said Mrs. Reynolds was having nothing to do with it; that Rosa was the one objecting to any intercourse with Metcalf. The same day on which Rosa wrote the Bruisin' Lad that she *could not* receive his letters, Mrs. Reynolds wrote that she *objected*. The latter, by this move, checkmated ma Sylvester, and threw the game at the Shirly end completely in the hands of That Bruisin' Lad O' Greystone Lodge.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ma and pa Sylvester were seated in their piazza late one evening, enjoying the cool mountain atmosphere after an extremely hot day. There was an unhappy, soured expression upon her countenance at which pa Sylvester glanced furtively and unseen every now and then. According to her idea things were all wrong, and she was sure no one could right them except herself.

In the first place, Frank Gordon had turned out to be not a mere penniless adventurer, as she would have him be, but the son of Doctor E. A Gordon, of Weston, one of the most elegant and wealthy gentlemen in the State of North Carolina. Ma Sylvester knew that while she could laud it over the Shirly folks and her connections, she could no more put on airs before those cultured people than she could travel the world in eighty days. Already she felt the contempt with which she knew the Westons would look upon herself and surrounding from a letter Julia received. The old doctor wrote that whilst he recognized the great social gulf between herself and his

son he was willing to bridge that on account of Frank's happiness. Not a word did he say about her family; neither a good wish nor an expression as to the future intercourse between the two. Ma Sylvester would have broken up the alliance at all hazards, but the young people, supported by pa Sylvester, routed her. They had made all their plans to be married in the fall, and at last she tacitly consented to it because she was powerless to offer resistance.

"Cheer up, ma," said pa Sylvester, "and do not look so gloomy. You can't expect to keep the girl always with you."

"If she had chosen properly we might have had her always with us. But we will lose her now sure enough. Precious little those proud Gordon's care about mingling with us!"

"Well, you ought to consider Julia's happiness before all. She is just as happy as the day is long, and he certainly is a gentleman. Jennie, we can't run over those kind of people to save our lives. Their superiority is stamped upon them. Make up your mind to bear it as well as you can, and comfort yourself with the reflection that Julia takes her place among those fine folks at the beginning of her life, to associate with whom you have been striving all of yours."

The modest John Sylvester, the modest contractor, had shoals of good, hard, common sense in a modest way, which he invariably exhibited in a modest manner.

"Everything goes against me," she proceeded mournfully. "Nobody cares for me, and I am always in somebody's way. Every body seems to be happy, while I am miserable."

"Yes, some one does care for you," he said, patting her shoulders affectionately. "I care for you, and a great many other people love you. Very few persons have more admirers and friends than you. Cheer up! and to-morrow I will carry you down and you can pick two nice dresses

for yourself while you are ordering Julia's wedding shindig."

"Trousseau, Mr. Sylvester!" she exclaimed, severely.

"Well, whatever you call it."

"Yonder goes that Metcalf now with Gordon," she said, her lip curling. "I am going to break up Frank's associating with him."

"My dear, that's just where you make a mistake—endeavoring to do everything to suit yourself. That's well enough among your own kith and kin, but other people won't stand it. I wonder what they are reading?"

"Some letter, I suppose." she replied, absently, as she watched them go up the street.

When the Bruisin' Lad returned from Etna he took Gordon into his confidence, feeling he needed some one to consult and advise with. They were just returning from the postoffice, where Charlie received Mrs. Reynold's reply to his letter. He was at that moment showing it to Gordon, who listened with much interest, and, occasionally in a patronising manner characteristic of men in his eligible position, suggested what should be done. He was much amused at the Bruisin' Lad writing Mrs. Reynolds about the interview, and her reply.

"She put her foot in, and no mistake," laughed Frank. "I tell you, Metcalf, you can turn her down nicely. Just write her that her daughter has already requested an end to all, and, therefore, her objections are unnecessary and her fears groundless. These women are always getting their feet in it in some kind of fashion. I say! did it ever strike you that the Etna girl is a deuced sharp one? She has managed things wonderfully well. Nine-tenths of the female sex in her situation would have either wounded you fearfully or resisted her people. She is a peculiar genius."

"I have been struck with her breadth and grasp of mind several times," said Metcalf, his eyes filling with a soft light.

"Well, what are your plans now?"

"I shall write James Metcalf all about it—reply to Mrs. Reynold's letter—go and have an interview with Rosa, and see what she will say."

"I would let ma Sylvester know that the Washington chap is nowhere, so far as Rosa is concerned."

"Not until after I see the latter. You see, she may not marry me on account of my misfortune."

"But as I understand it, you never have been married. You may be a subject of pity, but surely not of blame."

"I know that."

"Isn't it awful, old fellow, to have everyone think you are married, when as a matter of fact you are not? I would have kicked long ago."

"Not if it subjected the lady to a criminal prosecution, you wouldn't have done so," said Charlie, quietly.

"Strange! you didn't tell the girl about it," remarked Frank.

"I have never had an opportunity. When I see her next I will tell her all, and if she will promise me never to forget me then all will be right, and as soon as she is of age I will claim her."

"You won't do the romantic then and elope with her, provided she is willing."

"She is too high a woman to consent to any such proceeding unless forced," said Metcalf. "No, I will wait. All I want is her word at present. I never loved any other woman, and it is a life time matter with me."

"Metcalf, I couldn't wait that long. It seems to me that next fall will never come. I am going now and find my sweet, little vixen and take a walk."

"She cleaned up ma Sylvester, didn't she?" laughed the Bruisin' Lad.

"Whipped her all to fits," grinned Gordon. "My Respected Parent has consented to receive her, and all will go as merry as a—"

"Don't say Marriage Bell—it is such a common speech," interrupted Charlie.

"Well—as a Strawberry Feast," laughed Gordon, moving away.

Metcalf went into the inclosure and walked towards the piazza.

"What are you smiling at so," he inquired, as he discovered Mr. Sylvester sitting upon the porch, very much amused about some thing.

"What do you suppose is coming to pass?" he inquired.

"I am sure I can't tell."

"Why, Miss Eliza Langdon is going to be married."

"She ain't!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, she is—and guess to whom?"

Metcalf thought for a moment.

"It must be Sisson," he said, laughing.

"You are right—ain't it funny?"

"I wonder what brother-in-law Griswold has to say about it?" asked Metcalf, laughing softly.

"Oh, she is doing it to spite him. They had a fuss and she is determined Griswold's family shall have none of her property when she dies. Sheer revenge!"

"But isn't she rather too old to indulge in that kind of revenge, with any probability of success?"

"Hard to tell what a lady will do," said pa Sylvester, sagely. "They will fool you every time, and always do what you least expect. By the way—Mrs. Sylvester wishes to speak with you a moment in the parlor."

The Bruisin' Lad sauntered on into the room and found her pacing back and forth as if very much excited.

"Mr. Metcalf, I want to see you just a moment. I wish to apologize for the hasty expression I used to you the other day. I have nothing to do with your matters, and assure you that I will have nothing to say in connection with Rosa and yourself."

"No apology is necessary, Mrs. Sylvester," he said, kindly. "Don't worry yourself about it. I was sure you said it hastily, and thought no more about it."

"But as a matter of justice, I want to say this," she went on. "Neither Sallie, Elmira nor I had anything to do with Rosa's steps in this matter. She took everyone herself, irrespective of advice from anyone—so you can see that she cares nothing for you."

"Your theory about her caring nothing for me may be true," he said, smiling in a confident manner. "But your assertion as to facts is a total mistake."

His calm assurance in speaking, and confident smile made her divine for the first time that she had probably failed to reach the true facts in the case.

"Why, what do you mean?" she asked, with a surprised look.

"Your assertion that Miss Rosa did not wish to receive the letters is contradicted by her statement to me that she enjoyed them. Your statement that Mrs. Reynolds had nothing to do with the matter is wrong, because I have her letter stating that she did object."

"Well—I—never!" she exclaimed, as if her breath was taken away. "I think Elmira has treated me shamefully! She has not done me right! She promised she wouldn't say a word to anyone! I have her letters saying the girl didn't want to receive your letters—didn't care anything about you! That Elmira Reynolds is a mean woman! Let me tell you how she treated my daughter Julia in Washington—"

"Stop, Mrs. Sylvester," interrupted he. "I have nothing to say concerning your personal difficulties with Mrs. Reynolds, because I have nothing to do with them, but she has her end of the rope, too. It was but natural that she should be solicitous about her daughter's welfare. But she was misled by having certain statements written her which were not placed in their proper light. I am informed that you did that writing."

She was speechless for a moment.

"I never mentioned your name in a single letter I wrote her," she replied.

"Then that ends the discussion, if you disclaim it," said he, speaking in a kind of half contemptuous tone, as he turned and left the room.

The Bruisin' Lad was simply indifferent now to anything ma Sylvester could say. He knew she did write to Mrs. Reynolds, and used a fictitious name representing him, and in her reply Mrs. Reynolds spoke of the same name. Such evasion and subterfuge as that to conceal a fact was nothing more nor less than a contemptible piece of business in Metcalf's mind.

He went to his room and wrote a letter to his brother, James Metcalf, informing him all about the matter. He also penned another to Mrs. Reynolds, enlightening her as to his true position concerning the matter in connection with her daughter.

Having sealed and mailed these, he made up his mind to go and see Rosa the third evening from this. He thought once of writing and asking her to grant him an interview; but he was sure she would refuse on her mother's account. Finally he made up his mind to say nothing of the projected visit to anyone, but go on down in the evening, join her as she was going home and say what he wanted, hear her reply, and return on the 12:40 train.

At the appointed time he left, without even letting Gordon know where he was going. He reached Etna about six o'clock. When he stepped from the train he beckoned to a porter he knew—one who was trustworthy.

"John, I want something done."

"What is it?"

"Go up to Miss Limestone's and find out if Miss Rosa Reynolds is there, and what time she goes from the establishment to her residence in the evening."

"Yes, sir," he answered. "Where will I find you when I return?"

"In the reception-room, there."

In about ten minutes he returned.

"Miss Reynolds is up there and she goes home about half past six or a quarter to seven," said the man, smiling in a knowing manner.

"What time is it now?" asked Metcalf.

"Twenty minutes past six," he replied, grinning again.

The Bruisin' Lad strolled towards the bridge over the Cressida river. He determined to wait there until she came along and have his say where they looked over the railing into the water. Arriving at the spot, he took his position, and there came over his face that grim, determined look which always shadowed it when his mind was made up to pursue any certain course. But once or twice it relaxed, and a smile spread over his features as he thought how well Rosa had managed the whole matter, and what a safe-guard they created for themselves when they adopted perfect candor. He became amused, too, when he thought of his being here in Etna, while Gordon and the rest thought he was at Shirly, on the street somewhere. Presently he turned his face to the left and his heart gave a great, big bound, which for a moment caused his pulse to stand still. He saw her coming. How well he knew that graceful, long, swinging walk—that well turned, tapering neck—that rich coloring. He stood for several moments as if entranced. She was almost at him before she looked up. Raising her head when nearly opposite to him, she started. First a glad, then a surprised look came in her eyes.

"You here!" she exclaimed, pausing a moment.

"Yes, I must see you."

"Is it right?"

"I haven't the ghost of an idea: I only know that I am with you and therefore happy. Why did you ask for your letters back?"

For a moment she looked dreamily away down the river.

"You had better leave me, Mr. Metcalf, for mama would not like it."

"I shall not leave you until you answer my question."

"Because I was told to do it by mama," she answered.

"Why did you require me to stop writing to you?"

"Mama told me to do so."

"What reason did your mama give for making such demands of you?"

Again there was a pause as her head drooped.

"Because she heard you were married," she answered.

"Did you believe it?"

"I thought you might have been, but—but—"

"But what?" he asked, as she stammered and paused.

"That there might be some explanation of the matter."

"Do you believe I am married now?"

She looked up frankly into his face and met his open gaze.

"No, I do not," she said.

"Well, I am not," he said. "I will tell you all my past—"

"No, no, no!" she cried, looking at him with a joyous face. "I have nothing to do with your past. Your present and future is all I have to look to."

"Rosa Reynolds, you are the truest woman that God ever created."

"Am I," she asked, looking into his face with her usual guileless simplicity.

"I want you to promise me one thing and then I will be satisfied."

"What is that?"

"Promise me that in the troubles and difficulties we have to face—amidst all the trials and hardships we have to endure—that you will never forget me."

"I promise," she said.

"Spell those words on your fingers slowly, in order that they may be engraved on your heart."

Slowly, but gracefully, she spelt them out, looking sweetly and trustfully in his face all the while.

"Thank you, dear," he said. "Now what shall I promise you?"

"Nothing," she answered, softly.

"Why not?" he asked, drawing a little nearer to her.

"Because," she answered, leaning one arm on the railing, and looking at him so full of love and trust, "I feel that your own love is the best promise I can have. Couldn't you have thought that of mine without making me promise?"

The rebuke stung not less sharply on account of its gentleness. He felt cut to the quick.

"Darling, I never doubted you," he said, with an eager, hungry look.

"The word doubt should never be in the vocabulary of love," she said, quietly.

How she turned the Bruisin' Lad down!

"Do you love me then so much?" he asked, wistfully.

Looking at him she said:

"'I trust you, love you, for your own sweet sake,
Your noble mind and body, heart and soul,
Your fond devotion I will ne'er forsake;
But ever help you till we reach the goal
Of our united lives, and fondly take
Eternal comfort while the ages roll,
In the bright other life towards which we tend,
Where hearts ne'er separate—joys never end.'"

Her voice died away as she repeated the last lines. The lights along the river flickered up ever and anon, as if struggling for something they could not reach. During the moment's pause after she repeated the verse, the Bruisin' Lad was deeply touched. Her clear-cut features were almost death-like in their calm repose, as she gazed towards the river. Metcalf at last found a love in this woman's heart which he had hungered after all his life, and which met the most responsive chords in his. The sentiment, purity and guilelessness, bubbling forth with it, captivated the man's whole nature. Her surroundings were not the most propitious for cultivation of the higher sentiments of

any kind; yet, she gave birth to a love which can only exist in hearts of the highest capacity. Her very craving for that purer field in which to nurse and rear her love, was evident that her present surroundings were pulling her downwards, while she longed to be soaring upwards. Seeing no happiness except in the eternal union of their hearts she uttered her cry for an existence:

> "In the bright other life towards which we tend,
> Where hearts ne'er separate—joys never end."

He turned towards her with his longing, loving glance.

"And when I come for you?" he asked.

"I will come to you," she returned.

Without another word she walked away, as the Bruisin' Lad looked into the shadows of the night and wondered why he should feel so happy.

THE END.